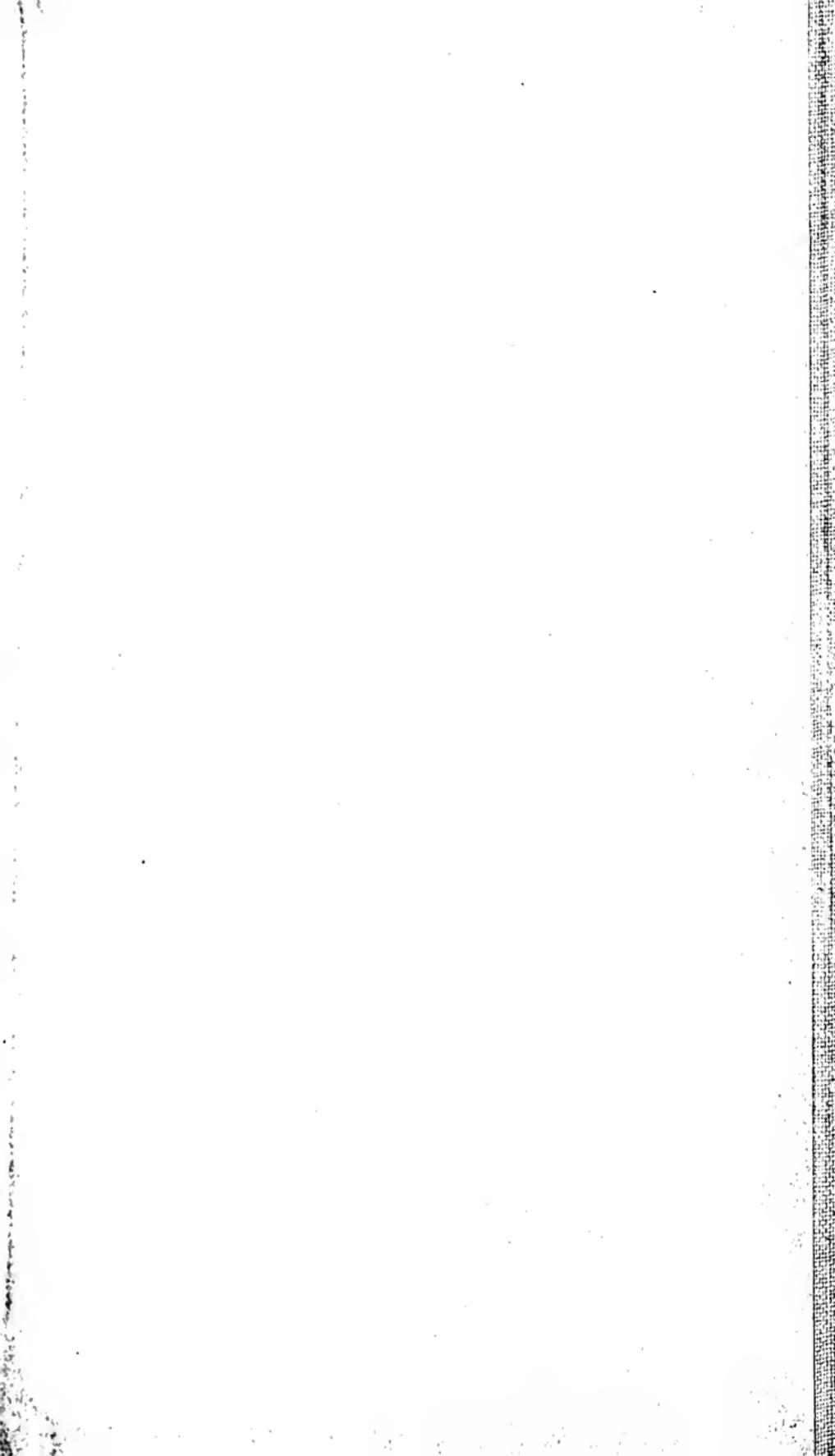


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H E A V E N; —

OR,

AN EARNEST AND SCRIPTURAL INQUIRY

INTO THE ABODE OF

THE SAINTED DEAD,

BY REV. H. HARBAUGH,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH, LANCASTER, PA.

Sixth Edition, Revised and Improved.

"Seelig sind die das Heimweh haben, deun sie sollen nach Haus kommen."
Stilling.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1852. —

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1849, by
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TO
THE MEMBERS
OF
The First German Reformed Church,
LEWISBURG, PA.,
OF WHICH THE AUTHOR WAS LATELY PASTOR;
AND,
TO THE MEMBERS
OF
The First German Reformed Church,
IN
THE CITY OF LANCASTER,
OF WHICH
HE IS NOW PASTOR:
WITH THE HOPE AND PRAYER THAT IT MAY BE A MEANS OF
ALLURING THEIR THOUGHTS AND HEARTS TO-
WARDS THE GLORIES OF
A BETTER WORLD,
THIS VOLUME IS
Affectionately Dedicated.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

FOR several years my mind has been specially directed towards the heavenly world. In gathering information on this interesting subject, I was surprised to find that so little had been written directly on it. I have also found, since my own mind has been employed on this subject, that there are many to whom it has been a subject of like interest, and who eagerly read what professes to throw light on it. I have therefore ventured to offer this volume as a contribution to this department of pious inquiry, hoping that the reading of it may be as much blest to the hearts of those

who read it, as I feel the writing of it to have been to me. Any book that will serve, in any degree, to draw the realities of the eternal world—especially of heaven—nearer to us, is not written and read in vain. There is great danger that the perishing objects of this life, because they are so near to us, may have a stronger effect on our hearts than those which are imperishable, because they are more distant. If, however, we can confirm our faith in them, and increase our desires after them, we have gained great helps to practical piety. “We are saved by hope.” The sentiment of STILLING on the title-page is most sweetly true: “Blessed are they that are home-sick, for they shall get home.” Nothing can better create, or keep alive, this home-sickness for heaven, than a vivid representation to our minds of celestial treasures and attractions.

LEWISBURG, PA., July 22, 1848.

PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

It was not a mistaken opinion, expressed in the preface to the first edition of this book, that there are many to whom this is an interesting subject, and who eagerly read whatever is written on it. Of this, the fact that the first edition was in a very short time exhausted, is the best evidence.

I attribute the favour which this volume has received, partly to the intrinsic interest of the subject itself, but chiefly to its being an attempt to exhibit the proper Protestant and scriptural side of the solemn things after death. It must be a matter of surprise to any one who earnestly pursues the history of this subject, to find how generally the prominent Protestant symbols are contradicted, and how almost every thing

that has been written on the subject of man's condition after death, is unsymbolic and unprotestant. If the position which our symbols take is not a true one, let the fact at once be acknowledged; if they teach the true and scriptural doctrine on the subject, let it be clearly exhibited for the consolation of the saints. The things of another life are, in their nature, so deeply interesting that all who earnestly look "for that blessed hope" will read, on the subject, what is offered to them, even though it be part popish and part pagan. This want should, by all means, be met by an exhibition of the subject in the light of our own symbols.

Since the issue of the first edition, I have carefully re-examined the whole subject, by the aid of a number of works which I have since been fortunate enough to procure. Among these are: "A treatise concerning the State of Departed Souls, before, at, and after, the Resurrection," by Rev. Dr. Thomas Burnet, London, 1730; "Dr. William Sherlock on a Future State," London, 1740; "The World to Come," by Isaac Watts, D. D. General selections, entitled: "The Mourner Comforted," by James Abercrombie, D. D.; "The State of the Departed," by John Henry Hobart, D. D.; "The

Happiness of the blessed," by Richard Mart, D. D. Upon a careful study of these and other authors, I have not found reason to change or modify any of the positions of this book; on the contrary, I have been vastly strengthened in them.

This Second Edition, therefore, goes forth without any change as to its position and doctrine. It has, however, been enriched at various points, and considerably enlarged by additional arguments, illustrations, and practical reflections, the fruit of continued attention to the subject. May it be found more worthy of the favour it has received.

To God, and to all who desire a "better country, that is, an heavenly," this volume is gratefully and prayerfully dedicated. May its deficiencies be forgiven; may its truths be blest: and, may all who shall read these pages become the happy heirs of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven."

LANCASTER CITY, September 4, 1850.

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HEAVEN.

INTRODUCTION.

The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

LIFT up your heads, ye heavenly pilgrims, and behold your home! Your earnest, longing eyes, turned upward, declare plainly that you seek a country. "Blessed are they that are home-sick, for they shall get home." As yet there is wo unto you, because you sojourn in Mesech, and are compelled to tarry in the tents of Kedar; but if you will, I shall speak comfortably to you, in the language of Canaan, by the way. Rest thee, then, upon thy staff, for even in this weary land whence ye go out, it is granted unto way-faring men to turn aside for a night, to refresh themselves with rest under the shadow of a rock. Strong in thy heart, it is true, are the drawings of thy Father, and of thy home; yet, in thy earnestness to gather the full harvest of heavenly fire-side joys, thou must not forget to enjoy the blessed first-fruits, which are granted thee as an earnest by the way. Wilt thou stop, then, brother pilgrim, till we commune

together in the joyful hopes of home, and refresh ourselves with visions of that heavenly land towards which our yearning hearts are aspiring ?

There is no subject upon which the mind ought to dwell more frequently, more joyfully, and more deeply, than that state of existence which lies beyond the grave. Whether it is acknowledged or not, this subject does, perhaps more than any other, occupy the thoughts of men. The hope of something better, and the dread of something worse, is always with man, to hang garlands of light and smiles, or of gloom and tears, along every path he takes through life. In the busiest hours, in the gayest circles, in the wildest confusion of earthly din and bustle, as well as in the hours of solitude, the powers of the world to come, at times, bear heavily on the spirit. This is natural, and it would be strange if it were not so. It is impossible that we, surrounded as we are by so many infallible evidences of our immortality, and tending consciously and fast toward an eternal state, should not often look, with trembling anxiety, beyond this life. The exile, while yet in chains on a foreign shore, thinks and dreams often of his home, but when he once leaves the shores of his captivity, and sails toward it, it becomes a subject of still deeper anxiety and greater longing ; we are exiles on our way home, already are we driving fast and far upon the sea of life : and ought we not to look anxiously towards our landing-place on eternal shores ? Who, with the Bible to direct his thoughts, and the Christian's hope to inspire his heart, can live without thinking much of heaven ? He who has this hope in him looks and longs for its complete consum-

mation, as one looks and longs for the morning during a long and wretched night.

It is somewhat strange that the future life does not occupy the attention of men—especially of Christians—in a different way from what it does. Their minds are thinking much of heaven, it is true, but it is only *thinking*, it is not earnest *inquiry*—it is not bending over and prying into it as the angels are said to bend over and look into the mysteries of salvation. The angels know that there is such a thing as salvation, but they are not satisfied with such a vague knowledge, they desire to look into it: so the saints ought not to be satisfied with merely knowing that there is a heaven, and content themselves with thinking of it in a general way; they ought to desire, by faith, and in the clear light of revealed truth, to go over and see the goodly land. Many Christians, however, go on through life with a professed hope of heaven, having nothing but some vague, undefined, and cloudy image of the land of their hopes before their eyes. It is a dreamy region in which their hopes swim.* Their thoughts

* The greater part of Christians rest contented with the most vague and incorrect ideas of the felicity of heaven, and talk and write about it in so loose and figurative a manner, as can convey no rational or definite conception of the sublime contemplations and employments of celestial intelligences. Instead of eliciting, from the metaphorical language of Scripture, the *ideas* intended to be conveyed, they endeavour to expand and ramify the figures employed by the sacred writers still farther, heaping metaphor upon metaphor, and epithet upon epithet, and blending a number of discordant ideas, till the image or picture presented to the mind assumes the semblance of a splendid chaotic map, or of a dazzling but undefined meteor. The term *Glory*, and its kindred epithets, have been reiterated a thousand

sometimes make excursions through it, but return because they have found no resting place. Man in analogous cases does not act so. He is prone to dive into his future history, and to measure and weigh its probabilities with an untiring curiosity. If he is about to remove to some unknown land, curious questions concerning it will be upon his mind during all the time he is making preparation, and he seeks in every way to inform himself concerning it; and it is strange how much he will soon know of it, even where the sources of information seemed at first exceedingly scarce. It

times in descriptions of the heavenly state—the redeemed have been represented as assembled in one vast crowd above the visible concave of the sky, adorned with “starry crowns,” drinking at “crystal fountains,” and making “the vault of heaven ring” with their loud acclamations. The Redeemer himself has been exhibited as suspended like a statue in the heavens, above the immense crowd, crowned with diadems, and encircled with a resplendent splendour, while the assembly of the heavenly inhabitants were *incessantly* gazing on this object, like a crowd of spectators gazing at the motion of an air-balloon, or of a splendid meteor. Such representations are repugnant to the *ideas intended to be conveyed* by the metaphorical language of inspiration, when stripped of its drapery. They can convey nothing but a meagre and distorted conception of the employments of the celestial state, and tend only to bewilder the imagination, and to “darken counsel by words without knowledge.”

Hence it has happened, that certain infidel scoffers have been led to conclude, that the Christian heaven is not an object to be desired; and have frequently declared, that “they could feel no pleasure in being suspended for ever in an ethereal region, and perpetually singing psalms and hymns to the Eternal”—an idea of heaven which is too frequently conveyed by the vague and distorted descriptions which have been given of the exercises and entertainments of the future world.—*Dick's Future State*, pp. 181, 182.

is because his earnest desire to know induces him to catch every item of intelligence that throws light upon the subject of his inquiries. Why do not Christians in like manner concentrate every ray of light that falls upon this world from that which is future, in order that they may, as intelligently and as comfortably as possible, journey toward it? Is it because their hopes to obtain, and their desires for it, are so weak and wavering? Alas! is not this the secret? The man who had bought a piece of land which was but an earthly trifle, must needs go and see it, though he thereby forego a rich feast; but he who professes to have an eternal inheritance beyond the grave, cannot forfeit a few of life's vain pleasures in order that he may examine it. Certainly such persons are not saved by hope!

It may be said, that heaven is only indistinctly revealed to us. It is true, heaven is exhibited to us in revelation mostly in figures, images, and symbols; but these are not without meaning. Indeed they are used for the very purpose of making the ideas which they are intended to convey plainer to us, and of giving us a more graphic description of those things which are unseen and eternal. We may know more of heaven from these figures, images, and symbols, than if it had been revealed to us by precept. In these we have envelopes of heavenly treasure, which we can unrrol, and when unrolled the treasures are our own. These symbols are caskets to which the humble and inquiring Christian has the key. The Spirit is his commentator; "He takes of the things which are Christ's," and ours because they are his, "and shows

them to us." Thus sayings upon the harp, which to some are dark and dead, or at best but uncertain sounds, are to the Christian, voices from a better land, which pour their rich and refreshing melody into his heart.

In the Old Testament, there are types, shadows, and symbols, yet they embosom great truths which in the new economy are clearly revealed; but we are not to suppose that the truths which they shadowed forth were entirely unperceived by the saints of that day. All the Jews, however, did not see these truths with equal clearness. To the thoughtless and wicked, the blood that flowed at the foot of the altar was only the blood of lambs, bulls, and goats; and the whole transaction of tabernacle service was to them only an empty ceremonial; but to those who ardently and piously longed for union with God, these were replete with divine power, truth, and consolation. The lamb slain on the great day of atonement, was to many a common lamb, and so in one sense it was; but to those who, with eyes fixed upon the promise, waited for the consolation of Israel, the whole transaction was a panorama of the future sacrifice of better blood on Calvary! The pious Israelite saw in these things a shadow of good things to come, the reality or substance of which they knew to be a true transcript of the shadow, and that they already apprehended by faith. Thus, what to the unbelieving and the careless seemed but dark floating images, were to them rainbows of promise, tinselled with the true substance of gospel glory. The Sun of Righteousness, which was afterwards to arise so gloriously over Judea's hills,

with healing in his beams, was already discovered by the heaven-averted eye of patriarchal faith, peering up behind the darkness of the typical age.

The New dispensation stands related to heaven as the Old dispensation did to the New. As Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets, saw, by virtue of superior faith, the outlines of the New dispensation, so we see now the outlines of a heavenly country. Those among the Jews whose faith was strongest, understood most of what would come to pass in gospel times; so now, those who stand most in the light, shall see the most light. Those whose eyes are ardently, piously, and longingly directed towards their future home, will get farthest in their knowledge of it. If we wait and look for it, being burdened, as the pious Jews waited for the coming Messiah, and if we study the word of God in reference to this subject as they studied the sure word of prophecy in reference to the Saviour for whom they looked, then we shall see every ray of light in the Bible which reveals heaven.

Many things may be known from the Bible about heaven, after close study, which are not known at first sight, or at first thought. In regard to this, as in regard to all its truths, it is inexhaustible; the more we learn, the more there is to be learned.

“Ever charming, ever new!”

He who sells all that he has, and buys this field of pearl, and then turns all his energies to digging, will find good treasures. As the opening rose reveals new beauty every time it rolls off an envelope, and as tints of tenderer and more refined beauty play upon its

petals the nearer you approach its heart; so, the nearer you come to the warm and living heart of divine revelation, the more sensibly will you see and feel the blissful power of heavenly things. If we get a letter from an absent friend, in which the country where he sojourns is described, we see things at a second reading which we did not see at first; and, if even the country is not professedly described, yet we are able to gather something from it in reference to the country. A mere allusion, or the relation of some relative matter, if followed up in thought, and compared with other known facts, may bring a field of information to light which was not even directly contemplated or intended by the writer. A book on one subject will often throw light, incidentally, on a dozen other subjects in its course, or suggest hints, which, if followed out, will lead to just and valuable conclusions. So in reading the Bible with reference to the subject before us, we are not dependent upon direct passages only, or on those passages where the sacred writer speaks professedly of heaven, but we may employ incidental hints and allusions, and may take all the light thrown upon it from collateral subjects. The resurrection, the judgment, the constitution of Christ's mediatorial person, and other collateral doctrines, may all speak. "In relation to the unseen world, Scripture is to be listened to much as we might listen to an ambassador from a distant country, who, while earnestly discharging the special duties of his office, and while urging at large the political and commercial interests of his sovereign, might make many allusions and employ many phrases, which, when collected and

attentively considered, would serve to convey some good general notion of the climate, usages, and wealth of his native land." A village and its landscape may be drawn from different points, and in each view some new object or feature will be included in the picture; so, heaven may be viewed from different parts of relative Bible truth, and from each it will receive some additional tint of glory, until the picture be such as eye hath not before seen, nor the heart of man conceived. Thus the subject will open much to continued, deep, and sanctified study.

Great familiarity with the Bible, with the expositions of it given by holy men, and with everything pertaining to the subject in general, is another source of light on this interesting subject. In this, as in other things, the hand of the diligent maketh rich, and he that seeketh shall find. The coarse features of scenery, which strike the eye when one looks on a landscape, are but a small part of those varied and ever-varying lights and shadows which strike the eye, touch the heart, and fire the soul, of an experienced painter or poet, and which are capable of receiving from them, upon canvass or paper, a local habitation and a name. So a careless passing glance cast toward the heavenly world by one who is bent upon the wild chase of earthly good, or the cold and idle look of dead faith, will not reveal those delicate and lovely glories which make up the tender details of celestial scenery.

This idea may be illustrated by an instance. All persons have a knowledge of Washington from reading the outlines of his life, or from tradition in the way

of fireside tales. They will, however, from these sketches, form a very incorrect, or at least a very limited idea of his real character. But let the same persons become great admirers of Washington, and consequently get also an increased desire to understand his character more fully. They will now read more extensive biographies, and read them more closely, endeavouring at the same time to fill out the picture in their minds with known facts. Besides they will gain access to his private journals and letters. They will read the lives of all such men as lived at the same time, and acted with him in the revolution — their letters to him, and his to them. Besides this, they will read the history of the times, and thus transplant themselves in thought into that age, and move in the living scene as it transpires before them. Thus will they get a different idea altogether of his character, and thus only will they get a proper one. Before, they saw his life in its coarse and imperfect outlines ; they saw him as a chief, a hero, lover of his country ; but now they see a feature of his character which was hidden by the very glare of these ; — they see him now as a man, a citizen, a friend, a parent. Before they could not get clear of the idea that he was a being of a different order from men in general, and this in spite of their better judgment ; but now they see him as a person like themselves in all the relations of life, only great in small things as well as in great things. Now, as a result of great familiarity with him in the more unobtrusive details of his life, they see another Washington, because they see the true one. Apply the illustration to the subject in hand, and it will teach

us that heaven will become a different heaven to those who by great familiarity with all that pertains to it in the Bible, make it a subject of careful, persevering, and deep meditation.

It requires, also, a heart in full and earnest sympathy with the powers of the world to come, and an ardent desire to be brought more under its influence, to learn what may be known of heaven. It requires a heart, whose very longings will draw heaven and earth together; a heart, whose faith will annihilate time, space, and death, and summon the substance of things hoped for right around it. This will have a tendency to produce a familiarity with things in the Bible which would otherwise remain obscure, and what might seem to be allusions and hints incidental, will be seized upon with pious avidity as sources of light to be interpreted by the heart's deep desires, in sweet submission to the guidance of that Spirit by whom we are led into all truth; and that Spirit by whom those deep spiritual wants and desires are first awakened will find means to direct and satisfy them.

In most that has been written on heaven, so far as it has come within the range of my reading, there is either too much wild and unwarrantable speculation* on the one hand, or too much vague spiritualistic use of the figurative language of the Bible on the other.† Both mislead the mind, and afford no satisfaction to

* Of this we have an instance in Taylor's Physical Theory of another Life, and in Dick's Philosophy of a Future State.

† Of this we have an example in that otherwise good book, Baxter's Saint's Rest, and in many other books on practical piety.

the spirit of pious inquiry. My object is to steer between these two extremes. When I speculate—if the carrying out of Bible truths to their legitimate consequences by the assistance of scripture allusions and established rational and analogical laws of interpretation, can be called speculation—it shall be tame, and tempered with that modesty and reverence which ought to characterize the Christian mind when looking into things not seen.

The Bible evidently says something—it says much—of heaven. What it says may certainly be known. What it says it is our duty and privilege to know, and as Christians we ought to have an ardent desire to know it. It does not tell us all, it is true, which an unholy and presumptuous curiosity might prompt us to wish, but it tells us enough to cheer our hearts, and strengthen our longings while we travel towards it. This it is my purpose to gather, arrange, illustrate, and enforce, for the instruction of inquirers after a better land, and for the comfort of those on the way who are faint, yet still pursuing.

I do not write for the schools; nor do I intend that this little volume shall lie on the table of the controversialist. I contend with what I consider error when it comes in my way, but do not go out of my course to seek it for the sake of strife. This is rather intended as a manual for the way. It may give refreshment at some “lodging-place of way-faring men in the wilderness.” It may while away the nameless inquietudes of a stranger in the land, when he turneth aside to tarry for the night. It may be of use to

The soul uneasy and confined from home.

It may be read at the cottage window when day-light closes, where sits some home-sick pilgrim tired of gazing into the dim distant blue, as if to see by sight what can only be seen by faith—a distant heaven! Or at the sunset hour, when the eye is disappointed in looking through the golden vista of bright clouds into a better land. Or at that

— time when moments flow
More peacefully than all beside :
That sweetest of all times below,
A sabbath eve in summer tide.

When the public exercises of the sanctuary are closed, when the holy quietude of closing day steals around, and when the soul, having had a foretaste of heavenly rest, is still ardently longing for the rest which remaineth—then, by its aid, the patience of faith may be strengthened, the tremblings of hope confirmed, and the wings of love plumed for heaven!

Reader, does your heaven-directed countenance declare to all you pass that you seek a country; and are you weary of all the oppressions that are done under the sun?—read of heaven; not so much in those bright and lucid moments when the smiles of God's countenance rest consciously upon you, and when the Spirit by a sweet impulse of faith mounts up as on eagle's wings; but read when your hours are loneliest, when your burdens are heaviest, when your temptations are strongest, when your way is darkest, when your friends are fewest, when your heart is weakest, and when the powers of hell are fiercest. For your comfort and encouragement come and see the good land. Get thee up into the top of the Pis-

gah of faith, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes !

Have you lost some of those to whom you were united on earth by the tenderest ties of the flesh, or by those purer and piously tempered affections which knit closer than the flesh ; and do you often bend over the sod where their bodies sleep, as if to call them back by the eloquence of tears ? Do you sit at the tomb of the beloved dead, and, filled with the spirit of pious hope, sing

Yet again we hope to meet thee,
When the day of life is fled,
Then, in heaven, with joy to greet thee,
Where no farewell tear is shed ?

Come, mourner bereft and sad ! Instead of standing upon their graves drooping and bent like the willow, and, like it, moaning over what it shadows, sit down on some green hillock like a consistent child of hope, and wipe your tears while you read of heaven. From that eternal home of the sainted dead, hear a comforting voice, “ He is not there ; he is risen : behold the place where he lay ! ”

Have you been marked for sorrow from childhood’s hour ? Have your fondest hopes been the play-thing of every passing change ? Do you lie neglected as a harp, whose music is no more sweet, because it is no more needed to make others happy ; and have the gems one by one dropped away from your circle of love ? Has your life become cold and desolate and dreary as a rainy autumnal day ? Look up, child of sorrow, for a bright heaven.

“Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal.”

The reason you are not happier is because you love too much this inconstant world, and you love it so much, because you have not sufficiently thought of a better. Why sit weeping among ruins, like melancholy Marius among the heaps of Carthage, calling back things that have died only to see them die again? “Let the dead bury their dead.” Why linger about the graves of buried hope, or unfaithful love, when before you is a land where hopes never disappoint, and where affections never die?

Are you a tempted soul, often in the wilderness in dark and dreadful conflict with Satan? Are those lying spirits whose name is legion, by your side to harass, and before to hinder you, and do you often become faint and disheartened because of the way? Do you sometimes cry out beneath a shower of falling darts, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life?” Look up; your reward is before you; the blessed thought of home will heal all the wounds received by the way. Arise ye, and depart in the strength of the Lord, for this is not your rest.

Ye young, who are wandering intoxicated with vanity in the mazes of a heated imagination, your thoughts are spreading the wing over hopes on which they can never light. You have seen the world and life only in the freshness and beauty of its morning dew, and you have loved them. You will yet learn that all is a vapour on the earth, which, like the morning cloud and the early dew, goeth away. The things which are seen are temporal. I desire you to learn this now, rather than hereafter by bitter expe-

rience; and, as you live on hope, direct those hopes to things which are unseen and eternal. Will you learn and believe that beyond the grave are not only the only realities, but the most glorious ones? Behold the glory of that world, that your eyes be not deceitfully dazzled by the sheen of this world, which must soon be merged into eternal night. Not only must the beauty and fire of youth die, but the heavens and the earth themselves, which are now, God has reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Amid the consternation and confusion of dissolving nature, when earth shall utter her final groan, where will you find a home, if not in heaven? If you are friendless, houseless, and homeless then, it will not be because you have not known of a heaven where the weary are at rest.

Aged pilgrim! you expect soon to go over! You are already going down the wintry hill-side of life towards the valley of the shadow of death. Lift up your eyes before you descend into the dark Jordan, and fix in your mind, as much as you can, the outlines of Canaan. Your eyes are dim to the loveliness of earth, your ears are dead to its music, and your feet are weary and heavy on its thorny road; lift up your eyes, and look for a better land, for behold it lies before you. To read of heaven is better than pastime for you while the chariots of Israel tarry. It will inspire an earnest longing to depart and be with Christ, and thus make your departure easy and your passage smooth.

Heaven, oh! heaven! who does not desire to know all that may be known of it? Heaven, it is our Fa-

ther's house, the home of angels, and of all the departed saints who have fallen asleep in Jesus !

“ Apostles, prophets, martyrs there
Around the Saviour stand.”

Heaven, it is the home of all our hopes ; the end of life's weary pilgrimage, where we all at last expect to dismiss our burdens, to forget our sorrows, and to wipe our tears. If this be heaven, then let us know what the Spirit saith concerning it to the churches !

O, Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st.

What in me is dark,
Illumine ! what is low, raise and support !

CHAPTER I.

Is Heaven a Place?

Oh, talk to me of heaven ! I love
To hear about my home above ;
For there doth many a loved one dwell
In light and joy ineffable.
O ! tell me how they shine and sing,
While every harp rings echoing,
And every glad and tearless eye
Beams like the bright sun gloriously.
Tell me of that victorious palm,
Each hand in glory beareth ;
Tell me of that celestial calm,
Each face in glory weareth.

“BEHOLD we have left all and followed thee ; what shall we have therefore ?” What shall we have therefore ? This is a question that frequently arises in the Christian’s mind, as he endeavours to cheer his oft-times drooping spirits with a look towards the recompence of reward. What shall we have ? We have left all for thee, and by following thee we have confessed that we are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. In this world we shall have tribulation, but thou didst overcome the world ; what shall those have who overcome with thee ?

These are the saint's ardent inquiries, when in the spirit of self-denial he stands above the earth and despises all its offers, and when, in the spirit of entire self-consecration to Christ, he has no desire but to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes. The ardour of hope outstrips the patience of faith, and hovering around the battlements of the celestial city, seeks a prelibation of promised joys. Although the opening gates let out no glory; though the anthems of their worship are not heard without; and though saints and angels,

“On heavenly pastimes bent,”

do not stop to give particulars to curious inquirers who linger in their way, yet modest inquiries are not improper, and may frequently be answered to the comfort and joy of believers.

The Saviour answered the above inquiry when made by Peter. He told him, “When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Here then there is curiosity which the Saviour himself approved, because he satisfied it. The same pious curiosity still manifests itself in the minds of God's people in their holiest hours, and shall there be nothing revealed to satisfy them? Yes, God will approve of such inquiries, and will grant the influence of that Spirit who leads into all truth, to all those who search the scriptures for an answer.

I propose in this book to consider some questions which often arise in the minds of Christians concerning heaven. In this inquiry we shall endeavour to

adhere closely to the sure word of prophecy. What the Spirit has revealed, through holy men of old, is profitable, what He does not reveal we cannot know. It was a comfort for Moses to view from Pisgah the promised land, though at a distance, where he could only get the coarsest outlines of its beauty; so it is sweet to us to see, from the mount of revelation, something of the heavenly Canaan, though it be only its veiled glory through a glass darkly.

In a world so full of change as this, and in the midst of a life which must so certainly and so soon come to a close, to be succeeded by an eternal state, there are few who do not, at times, think earnestly about a home beyond this life. This is a subject which especially occupies the minds of the truly pious in the twilight of life's loveliest and loneliest hours. It is the land of their hopes, and of their treasures! To it they are bound, not only by the power of a deathless faith, but by that holiest and sweetest of all human ties,—affection for their beloved dead who have died in the Lord.

IS HEAVEN A PLACE?

And as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Is heaven a place, or is it a state of existence merely? Has it locality, and is it material? Shall we exist in the heavenly world, related to time and space? Will that world be visible to the eye and

tangible to the senses? In short, will it be a local, material, visible, and tangible heaven? These are questions which often arise in the minds of Christians, and so far as light is thrown upon this subject by revelation, so far it is right that these inquiries should be answered.

Some have professed to believe that heaven is merely a state of being, without any reference to time or place, as the state of matrimony or slavery. Thus it has been said that heaven is as much where we are, or a foot from us, as any where else. It has been said that where there is a holy soul, there is heaven; that the spirit after death is disconnected from matter, from time, and from space, and enjoys a kind of bliss so purely abstract and spiritual that it is in no way connected with matter however refined. It is hard to understand this theory, but somehow the spirit floats in a spiritual element, enjoys itself and is happy, in a state entirely separated from all that is tangible to our senses. This theory of course traces its origin to the old Platonic notion that matter is essentially evil, and the highest good consists in getting entirely clear of it.

“The common imagination,” says Dr. Chalmers—we hope not altogether common,—“that we have of Paradise on the other side of death, is that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing—where all the warm and sensible accompaniments, which give such an expression of strength, and life, and colouring to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is meagre, and imperceptible,

and utterly uninviting to the eye of mortals here below—where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but unearthly scenes that have no power of allurement, and certain unearthly ecstasies, with which it is felt impossible to sympathize."

To show the folly of this theory it is sufficient to remark, that if this be true, then the five senses by which the spirit now communicates with the material world would be quite useless, and would be dispensed with; but as the habits of the spirit have been formed by the activities of these senses, and as all the faculties of the mind have been trained to act through these channels, it would seem very violent to cut them off at once and for ever from that mode of acting. It would seem that such a transition would require nearly, if not altogether, the destruction of the mind as it now is, and the erection of one entirely new. This is only a rational objection; it will be hereafter seen how this mystic dream is further condemned by the positive arguments for heaven's locality, both from reason and from scripture.

It is evident, from various considerations, that heaven is strictly and properly a place—a local and material heaven.

When we say that heaven is material, it must be remembered we do not assert that matter there appears in just the same form, or that it is of the same construction or appearance as it is here upon the earth. It may be far less rough and coarse, and yet be matter still. Matter, we know, is capable of many combinations, and perhaps of many the nature of which we cannot at present conceive. We know that

matter can and does exist in a very refined state; as, for instance, in light, electricity or air, all of which are material. Philosophy assures us that the matter of which the planets are composed is very differently combined, so that their appearances to the senses are widely different. The planet Mercury, which revolves nearest the sun, it is said, is far more dense and solid than any of the other planets. From what we know, therefore, it is certain that a material world may exist, more refined in its constitution, more delicate in its combinations, and consequently more beautiful and glorious in its construction and appearance. When we speak, therefore, of heaven as a material world, let not the reader's imagination present to his hopes a world like this earth, as though this was the only form in which it is possible for matter to exist. "All flesh is not the same flesh,"—though all flesh is material,—"but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial:"—these are all material bodies,—"but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory."

A strong presumptive evidence for the locality of heaven is furnished by enlightened reason. The soul is constitutionally interwoven with an external world throughout all its mundane history. The mind or spirit develops itself in this connexion, and in its very texture it is intertwined with the forms of time

and space. It rests, if not necessarily,—though this I think, not, however, in a materialistic sense, might be confidently affirmed—yet by a powerful habit, upon matter; and this habit is not an incidental state, but it is the only state of existence with which the soul was acquainted from the first dawn of its consciousness. As has been above observed, to tear the spirit suddenly loose, at death, from these relations to an external world, and place it into a state completely and for ever isolated from all matter, where it would find no opportunity to exercise these faculties, would be subjecting it to a terrible violence! A violence which would destroy its personal identity.

The faculties of the soul are necessarily dependent, for a healthful exercise of their energies, upon an external world. A moment's reflection will convince us of this. Reason steps from one deduction to another, by the aid of analogies which it finds in the world without, so that it is dependent on the external world for the exercise of its strength. The mind, in reasoning, *cannot* divest itself of analogies. Imagination must have a real world in which to range; the material with which it builds, it gets from the material world; all it can do is to combine—it cannot create. Memory must find a backward track through time and space, or it is dead. All these faculties are supplied with materials to keep them in life and vigour, through the senses, from an external world. Shall these faculties be cut off from their sources and conditions, and die? No. Reason must exist in the future life to approve the dealings of God with the soul, and to adjudge him praise for his goodness.

Memory must wander back to earth to remind the soul for ever of its obligations to the Saviour who redeemed it from the sink of sin, and when it does travel back imagination must be the wing to bear it.

The first, and most natural impression, that every one gets on reading the Bible, concerning heaven, is that it is a locality somewhere in God's universe; hence the majority of Christians, without ever questioning the propriety of their belief, have intuitively that impression of another world. This impression is piously and pleasantly cherished, and can only be removed by that reckless speculative curiosity by which the holiest of divine truths are invaded and dislodged by such as are cruel and bold enough to take away the contents of our faith without feeling themselves responsible to furnish us with a better. Learned men who have examined the popular ideas on this subject, instead of casting them away, have found it pleasant to cherish and retain them as congenial with the deepest and holiest wants of the spirit. Hence also almost all who have expressed themselves on this subject, even without assigning any reason for it, have unhesitatingly expressed themselves as believing in a material heaven.

It may be objected, that these impressions may be wrong; and we may be referred to cases which seem analogous, where they have been wrong; as, for instance, the first impression we get of God on reading the scriptures, is, that he has a form like a man, having hands, feet, mouth, ears and eyes; but I answer, that this being spoken after the manner of men, is soon corrected by the distinct declaration that God is

a spirit, while with regard to heaven it is not so. The impression which we at first receive is not corrected by any plain declaration; on the contrary, continually strengthened and confirmed, as will shortly be seen. We conclude, therefore, that the sacred writers would not make an impression which is so easily received, and which is so general, only to be

“The herald of a lie.”

The general impressions which we receive on reading the Bible first have a great influence on those particular investigations which we afterwards make. We cannot avoid looking through these general impressions, and they will cast their shadow on all that we see; it is not at all possible, therefore, that God would so construct his revelation, in which immortality is brought to light, as to make these first impressions afterwards mislead us.

From these introductory considerations, which, though not without much force, are only presumptive, we pass on to consider the light which is thrown upon this subject by the sure word of inspiration. God has not left us in the dark upon a subject of so much interest and importance in connexion with the future life.

It is plainly declared in Scripture that heaven is a locality. It is called a place. “I go to prepare a PLACE for you.” The Saviour says farther, that when this place is prepared, he will come again and receive us to himself, that where he is we may be also. Here is reference to place; WHERE he is we shall be. We shall be together in the same locality, and that to behold his glory and to see him face to face.

It could not be a suitable abode for the saints, if it were not a local, material heaven. The saints will have bodies. Pure spirits may, for aught we know, exist differently ; but the saints, having bodies, must have a material dwelling-place, because they are material. Can the abode of these bodies be less tangible than the bodies themselves ? Certainly not. They cannot be suspended in air, or float in space eternally ! Though the bodies of the saints will be, in some respects, no doubt, greatly changed—for we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump—and they will be spiritualized in a way now unknown to us, yet they will be bodies still. “There is a spiritual body.” Job felt confident that he should in his flesh see God. A human being consists of soul and body, the one material and the other immaterial ; these two united make the man, and they must therefore be united again in the future world, if the man is to retain his nature. Hence we read, that they that are in their graves shall come forth, and that our vile bodies, as well as our souls, shall come under the transforming power of Christ’s resurrection-life, and be fashioned like unto his glorious body. The Saviour’s body rose as a first-fruit and pledge of the resurrection of our bodies, and at his resurrection “many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came of the graves,” as an evidence that his resurrection had shaken off for ever the fetters of the tomb from his saints, and henceforth they shall live because he lives. In virtue of all this, the saints now rejoice in hope, and we “which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we

ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The body, then, will be raised and become a sharer with the spirit in the blessed gift of immortality. Whatever will be the refinement of this immortal man,—though raised in honour, in power, in incorruption, in spirituality, yet he has a body, and must therefore have a local platform, a physical substratum, for his future habitation.

The bodies of Enoch and Elijah are in heaven. "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him." His body was made immortal, incorruptible, and glorified, without going through the change of death; and it was not to be found by his friends, that it might have the rite of burial, because God had translated it into heaven. "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it." It was a visible translation. Elijah took his body with him, which, in form and appearance, was the same as that in which he wandered about on earth, for Elisha saw it go up. Where that body now is, there must be a local heaven, and it must be as material and tangible as the body for whose activities it is the platform.

The Saviour took with him into heaven a visible, tangible, material body. When he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, and consequently in his resurrection body, they were terrified and affrighted, supposing him to be a spirit; but he said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see: for a spirit hath not *flesh and bones*, as *ye see me have*. And when he had thus spoken, he

showed them his hands and his feet." Luke xxiv. See also John xx. 29. This he said to convince them that he was not a spirit. He appeals first to their sight, "Behold my hands and my feet," then to their sense of touch, "Handle me, and see." In order to convince them still more fully that his resurrection body was a real human body, he did eat before them a "piece of broiled fish, and of a honey-comb." Soon afterwards, when he had given them satisfactory evidence that he was not a phantom, but the real and true human Christ, "he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." He was visible to them "while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up," until a cloud received him out of their sight. We are told also, that this same Jesus shall come again in like manner as he was seen going up. (Acts i. 11.) He has not, therefore, laid aside his human body, and become an invisible spirit, but he retains it, and will come in it when he shall come to judge the world. The same Jesus who died and rose is also in heaven now at God's right hand. There he is visible and occupies a place. There we expect to "see him as he is;" we shall look upon him as the disciples looked upon him while he stood, sat, or moved in their midst. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold him, and not another." Where Christ's body is, there must be a material heaven.

It is sometimes objected that saints will not have

bodies in heaven, at least not constructed after the same form as these we have on earth. In confirmation of this objection, the passage of Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 50, is quoted: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." This passage, however, when correctly interpreted, does not confirm the objection. The expression "flesh and blood," is figurative, and is used to express man's carnal nature. When Peter confessed Christ with such a blessed unction, the Saviour said that he was blessed in being enabled so to confess him, because "flesh and blood" had not revealed his divine character to him, but that this knowledge had been bestowed upon him by his Heavenly Father. The meaning is, that his carnal nature could in no case be the source of such knowledge, and the fact that he had this knowledge, was proof that he was in gracious communion with his Heavenly Father, therefore he was blessed. (Matt. xvi. 17.) See also Eph. vi. 12: Gal. i. 16. The expression is also sometimes taken "for the quality of corruption, which is not sinful, but the effect of sin, to which our bodies are subject in this life. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; that is, our frail corruptible bodies cannot come to heaven: that which shall inherit heaven must be incorrupt flesh, a body without corruption." This seems to be the meaning of the expression in Heb. ii. 14, where the Saviour is said to have taken upon him flesh and blood, because the children whom he would save, were partakers of the same. He did certainly not take a carnal nature, but he took a body having the innocent

infirmities which belong to man in his fallen state. He took a body which had in it the possibility of dying ; he did not take sin upon himself, which is its cause, but these infirmities which are its consequences. He took this nature, disposed to die, upon himself, that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death. The Christian has the same still in his converted state, for he is disposed to death and corruption ; but this part of his nature cannot inherit the kingdom of God : it will be displaced by an imperishable nature, suited to an immortal existence ; for since we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Now, either of these two meanings will better suit the context than to take the passage literally. It is, perhaps, most consistent with the context to say that it includes both these ideas. In the context preceding the passage, he speaks of those that are earthly, by which he seems to mean such as are carnal, which would require the passage to be understood as having reference to man's carnal nature. In the context succeeding, he speaks of corruption and incorruption in man, without any reference to sin as the cause of corruption ; this would rather favour that exposition which makes flesh and blood to mean the innocent infirmities of man's nature, which are not themselves sinful, but are a result of sin. It may, therefore, consistently include both these ideas, because they are united as cause and effect, and are, in their ground, one. Then he would say, man's carnal nature, which is sinful, shall not inherit heaven ; for as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly ; neither shall

that part of man's nature which is liable to decay, having become so as the result of sin, get to heaven, for corruption doth not inherit incorruption.

We come, then, to this conclusion, that from what is revealed concerning the Saviour's body, and the bodies of the saints after the resurrection, we may be firmly persuaded that heaven, which is to be their eternal abode, is a local, material heaven; in all respects suitable to be the dwelling-place of such bodies. In the language of Knapp, "according to the New Testament, man will possess a *body*, even in the future life, and continue to be, as he now is, a being composed of both *sense* and *reason*; and so there, as well as here, he will have the want of something *cognizable by the senses*." We look, therefore, says Krummacher, for "a house, a home, a heavenly paternal home; a peopled residence, a real habitation, where we shall know one another, and be with one another upon terms of the most intimate friendships and the dearest fellowships."

If the heavenly inheritance be a material world, then matter must exist there in some kind of organization; what form of organization we cannot precisely know: this it hath not entered into the heart of man fully to conceive. The scenery of heaven presented to us in Scripture, is similar to what we see on earth, and its representations are perhaps not entirely metaphorical and figurative. That we shall find there trees, streams, mountains, &c., I will not affirm, but much less will I deny. Our minds are habituated to objects of sight in this form here on earth; we think by earthly analogies: it is not pro-

bable that at death our minds will, abruptly and violently, be transferred into scenes to which, in their constitution and previous habits of acting, they are entirely unused. Whatever may be the forms of organized matter in heaven, it is certain that matter in these organizations is more completely under the power of the laws of life than it is in this world. In this world all organized matter, even that in our bodies, is partly under the power of the laws of attraction and gravitation, and only to a limited extent under the power of the laws of life. In heaven, however, the laws of life may bring matter so entirely under its power, as to surmount and supersede completely the laws of attraction and gravitation. Then life would be most gloriously free! In that case, there could be no such thing as decay. It is the friction, so to say, produced by the opposite interests of the laws of gravitation, and the laws of life incessantly contending, which wears out and tears down all earthly organizations, and produces decay. Oh! what scenery must that be where the animations of life meet no barrier, are subject to no obscuration, and know no decay!

That a material world, even with scenery similar to that of earth, is a fit abode for holy spirits, is evident from the fact that Adam and Eve lived in such a world in their holy state. God, no doubt, put them into a place which was entirely adapted to the nature of their being, and where they could enjoy the highest degree of spiritual advantage and happiness. His benevolence would induce him to this. Hence also we are told that he planted a garden eastward in

Eden, and made to grow in it “every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.” It was not even a barrier to the holy joys of Paradise that they should “dress it and keep it.” Nature in Paradise, in the form of earthly scenery, was not polluting or degrading, but rather elevating to holy minds. It was both a happiness and a benefit for their minds to refresh themselves in communion with the external world in that garden of delights. Eden scenes laid their lovely transcripts upon their hearts, and lived in their thoughts as things of pure beauty and love. Every object around them was clothed in unsullied freshness, when reflected from the pure mirror of their pure hearts. Every thought that arose in their minds, partook of the beauty of the surrounding scenery, by which it was suggested or begotten, and every word they spake, fell upon fragrant air. The echoes of their own words in that holy place were like angel voices to their hearts. If such was Eden, created by God himself as a fit abode for holy beings, and adapted by his own hands to their purest and highest joys, why should we consider it gross to think of similar scenery in heaven? Similar—yes, for Paradise on earth is a type of Paradise above; and it must needs be that the pattern of heavenly things on earth, should have some similarity to their substance in heaven.

What a garden of delights must that world be! What scenery must the heavenly landscape present to the enraptured gaze of the saints! Even in this world there are scenes of beauty, which fill the soul with the freshest delights, especially of such as can see God in nature. What cool groves, what fragrant

bowers, what quiet meadows, what murmuring, laughing streams, what green, extended plains, what solemn mountains, what bright and peaceful heavens—in short, place together and take in one view, by the power of the imagination, all the thousand things of beauty which make up the lovely details of earthly scenery, and what scenes of surprising loveliness and beauty does even earth afford ! If such scenes still appear in the land of the curse, what must it be where no curse was ever known ! Imagination staggers and trembles in its present abode of clay, under the effort to realize the glories of the final abode of the sainted dead.

Hail ye blest inhabitants of that lovely and peaceful land ! Hail ye happy spirits of the sainted dead ! We feel, even here upon earth, a comfortable earnest of your celestial joys. The bright landscape of those immortal realms lies before the eyes of our faith in smiles of invitation. We are cheered, even on these low grounds of sin and sorrow, by the dawn of an eternal morning, and we have a desire to depart ; yet “all the days of our appointed time will we wait till our change come. Thou shalt call, and we will answer thee.”

We speak of the realms of the blest,
Of that country so bright and so fair
And oft are its glories confess'd—
But what must it be *to be there !*

We speak of its pathways of gold,
Of its walks deck'd with jewels so rare,
Of its wonders and pleasures untold—
But what must it be *to be there !*

We speak of its freedom from sin,
From sorrow, temptation, and care ;
From trials, without and within—
But what must it be *to be there!*

We speak of its service of love,
Of the robes which the glorified wear,
Of the church of the first-born above—
But what must it be *to be there!*

Do thou, Lord, 'midst sorrow and wo,
Still for heaven my spirit prepare ;
And shortly I also shall know
And feel what it is *to be there!*

CHAPTER II.

Where is Heaven?

Oh ! could our thoughts and wishes fly,
Above these gloomy shades,
To those bright worlds beyond the sky,
Which sorrow ne'er invades !

HERE let no one's curiosity be unduly on the alert. Speculations on this subject are plenty and sufficiently wild. I do not intend to add to them. There is a class of persons who are always more diligent to pry into things not revealed, than into things which are. Let that fancy which is ever on the wing, and ready at the smallest beck to soar into things not seen, stay its flight. It will fly in vain, for, like Noah's dove, it will find no resting-place. It may for a moment rest on some floating twig on this pathless ocean, but before it can nestle itself into a comfortable quiet, a billow will drive it away. Thus fancy may find a home for the spirit, but it will be a home on the deep. If, then, we desire to know where is our future home, we must cast down imaginations, take the Bible, and sit at the feet of Him who brought immortality to light. What we learn in this way, though it may not

be much, will be true, and it will also be all that we need know, while we are on this side of the grave.

The ancient nations and tribes have always somewhere located for themselves a heaven, as the object of their desires and hopes. The spiritual longings of the superstitious pagans found a home for their dead beyond the misty sea. There, in some island, unknown and unvisited by mortals, their imaginations located the Hesperian gardens and Elysian fields. Their fancy beautified them with beds of flowers, embowered walks, cool retreats, mossy seats, and groves of spices, quiet valleys and crystal streams, sparkling fountains and skies unclouded, and airs rich with odours, upon which floated the matins and vespers of the blest in notes of unearthly sweetness! Here was a home for their weary spirits, the thoughts of which made the ills of life more easy, and the thoughts of death more comfortable. The leaders of the people promised them that if they lived virtuous lives, according to the pagan notions of virtue, they should at death be borne away to these abodes of blessedness and peace.

More modern discoveries show that similar ideas of a home for the spirit after death, prevail among the inhabitants of the different islands of the ocean.* As the dead are put out of sight, it is natural that they should locate the abodes of their spirits out of sight; and hence they generally fix upon some lovely island in the far off seas. “The North American Indians believe that beyond the most distant mountains of

* See Dick's Future State, page 20, et seq.

their country, there is a wide river; beyond that river a great country; on the other side of that country a world of water; in that water are a thousand islands, full of trees and streams of water, and that a thousand buffaloes, and ten thousand deer, graze on the hills, or ruminate in the valleys. When they die, they are persuaded that the Great Spirit will conduct them to this land of souls." Their ideas of the place where they shall be blest after death, are beautifully described by the poet.

"Even the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind,
Whose soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way—
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-capt hill, an humbler heaven ;
Some safer world in depths of wood embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold,—
And thinks, admitted to yon equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."—POPE.

It was natural for these pagan nations and tribes thus to create imaginary worlds of happiness. The desire for happiness in the human breast is general and natural, and where the least idea of the soul's immortality exists, this desire is increased. As immortality has been brought to light more clearly by revelation, it has also increased, in like proportion, the desire of future blessedness. The pagan nations having had but a limited knowledge of the world in which they lived, very naturally suffered their speculations to locate their heaven in the unknown regions.

We, being acquainted with this world, give our imaginations more scope, and therefore seek no more for the abode of the blest on the plain of this earth ; but, invited and allured by revelation, the human mind has directed its speculation into the heavens, where many worlds are still floating like islands in the blue sea of space,—here fancy may still erect its castles where no human eye can penetrate to question the reality of their existence. Speculations are therefore not yet at an end. The earnest eye of men, stirred by immortal desires, still wanders through the wide universe of God, and fixes us now on one place, and now upon another, as the probable abode of the blessed dead.

I will present to the reader some of the speculations which have been made by deep-thinking men in reference to the locality of the future world of the blest. This is done, not to invite his faith, or to satisfy his curiosity, but to prepare the mind for something surer and better, into which, I trust, his convictions may be led by aid of the sure word of prophecy. The bee hovers around the flower before it lights upon it ; we cannot tell the reason, but we are satisfied with its conduct. Men will speculate ; and if you lead them not a chase through its wild regions, they will not relish the truth. The prodigal is better satisfied with his home after he has travelled. One who has long wandered in dreary mountains, scaled precipices, wound around rocks, trees, pits, and brush, though the excursion was romantic and pleasant at first, is glad to find some beaten path. So, when we walk a while in the devious and difficult regions

of speculation, we will walk more contentedly, and with greater relish afterwards, in the divinely illuminated path of revelation. Will the reader then please to follow firmly and heartily on, we will promise to bring him safely back again, with his experience perhaps somewhat enlarged, and, no doubt, like all travellers, better content at home than before.

SECTION I.

THE THEORY OF PROGRESSIVE ASCENSIONS.

Some have supposed that the heaven of the blest is not one particular place or locality, but that it consists in a series of progressive ascensions. That at death we do not pass into one permanent habitation, but that we change place from one platform of existence to another, but still higher, and that a great deal of happiness is derived from the new range of knowledge which is thus opened to the soul in each successive stage of its ascent. Thus we are supposed to experience at each ascent a new change, similar in effect, though not in nature, to that which attends our passage out of this life at death. It will easily be seen that this is a refinement of the ancient doctrine of transmigrations, and may be traced back to that idea as its germ.

According to this theory, it has been supposed that the numerous worlds which we see rolling through the heavens are the different platforms upon which the successive stages of our spiritual history are to transpire. Thus, as we pass from one world or star to another, a still wider view of the Creator's power and

perfections will be opened to us, while our powers will be still farther unfolded towards our endless destiny. Then the whole universe being our “Father’s house,” these worlds will be the “many mansions” prepared for the children of God, through all of which it will be our delightful privilege to pass.

This theory is beautiful, and at first sight plausible. The difficulty, however, is that the scriptures reveal nothing of such a series of progressive changes. It does give countenance to the idea that the soul shall progress in the way of evolution and development towards its perfection for ever, but it intimates nothing of successive changes of residence, as the ever-ascending platforms upon which these successive developments shall take place. On the contrary, the future abode of the saints is represented always as a permanent location, where they shall be peculiarly and for ever at home, and it is not the smallest part of its attractions, that it is free from changes, and that its inhabitants go no more out. This abode is represented as the fixed and peculiar residence of God; where he manifests himself in glory through the incarnate Redeemer to all intelligences, whether angels or men, the imperial city of the King of kings!

That the saints may, and do, make temporary excursions from planet to planet, through the universe of God, we do not wish to deny; for that seems altogether probable, and does not conflict with the impressions of a fixed and permanent abode as we get them from God’s word. Still this is different from the idea of successive ascensions, as understood in this theory. This theory holds that the soul, ever

restless, ascends still upward through continual change of residence, and every new position is to be gained only to be in like manner again surmounted and left behind, while the soul is ever changing homes, and never at home. Whereas, the other idea assigns to the soul a permanent home, from which it may go out to explore and admire the vast universe, and thus enjoy itself and God in his boundless works, while it is, notwithstanding, ever at home, in a proper sense, at the same place.

SECTION II.

PROGRESSIVE ASCENSIONS IN ANOTHER FORM.

There is another theory somewhat allied to this, given by an original and ingenious writer,* and accompanied by striking and seemingly plausible arguments. As this theory is stated in terms which might make it to some readers obscure, I prefer to state it in my own language.

In this theory, the universe of known worlds, according to known facts, is divided into two parts, each part comprehending a particular class of worlds. The one class consists of suns, which are centres of systems, and the other of planets, subordinate to them, depending on them, and revolving round them in the same way as is known to be the case with the solar system. These primary planets are schools of instruction and initiation, the suns are the central homes for all rational orders belonging to the system, to which

* Taylor's Physical Theory of another Life, chap. xvi.

they are taken after they have gone through the preparatory course of being on one or other of the primary planets. The sun or central world is the heaven and home of each system, where all will meet at last in happy company.

This, however, is not to be their final and eternal home; but is again preparatory to an existence still higher. "For," says the author, "the opinion has often been advanced, and seems to be gathering strength, that the sun and other stars, that is to say the entire celestial system visible to us, is in actual movement in one direction; or that it is rolling around a common centre. But who shall calculate the dimensions of that central mass which may be adequate to sustain the revolution of all suns and worlds? If each sun be a place of assembly and a home of immortality to all the rational planetary tribes of its system, the vast world around which all suns are supposed to be revolving, may be the home of a still higher order of life, and the theatre of a still more comprehensive convocation of the intellectual community."

Bringing this theory down to practical application, it is argued that our sun is a world of too much importance to be considered merely as a lamp or hearth to the earth, or as the swivel of its revolutions. It is also said that modern discoveries have almost demonstrated that the surface of the sun is habitable. Especially may it be a fit realm for refined, incorruptible, and immortal bodies, such as are promised to us after death. It is farther argued that there is apparent on the planets a fitness for mortal life, and on the sun a

fitness for immortal life. On the earth, for instance, as well as on all primary planets, there is continual change, such as summer and winter, day and night, excitement and repose, all of which is favourable to dissolution ; the sun, on the other hand, is free from all these changes produced by diurnal and annual revolutions ; and not being subject to the friction of excitement and repose, it is favourable to immortal life. On earth seasons of repose for the body are necessary, because the soul in its activity out-labours and tires the body its fellow ; hence night and rest for the body are provided in the arrangement of the earth's diurnal revolutions, that its exhausted stores may be replenished. On the sun, however, no such seasons are afforded, and hence it is concluded that they are there not needed, and that their absence makes it strongly probable that these are the abodes of immortal life.

To this theory, plausible as it seems to be made by a number of scientific probabilities, I must offer a few formidable scriptural objections.

The Jews reckoned the sun, which is thus made our first heaven, as well as all the visible planetary worlds to the second heaven ; whereas the heaven which the scriptures represent as the abode of the blest, is “far above *all* heavens”—and hence even beyond the third heaven, and separate from it. The place into which Paul was caught up, and into which the Saviour ascended, is beyond the bounds of all that is visible. In that place the Saviour now is, and in that place he was at the time when the apostle said that to be absent from the body was the same as to be present

with the Lord. If the saints, then, when they leave the body, are to be taken to the place where Christ is, and if Christ is beyond all heavens, then there is no room for the idea that the rational beings of the primary planets will first be assembled on their respective suns, and after some time be again advanced higher. The same considerations also which have been urged against the theory of successive ascensions in a previous section, lie with equal force against this theory.

If it be argued, however, that the sun is only one stage of the soul's ascension, and that as the sun and its systems revolve around some other centre, so the soul will in due time be promoted to the central sphere as its final home;—then we answer that the scriptures, although they do not discountenance the idea of such a central world, around which all subordinate worlds move, do nevertheless every where discountenance such a gradual promotion of the spirit. It will hereafter be shown that, according to scripture, the souls of the saints pass immediately at death to their final home; that they go to the place whither the Saviour ascended, which is the place highest in glory and honour in the universe of God. He went beyond the veil into the holy of holies, which is heaven itself. There is the place which he has prepared for us, from whence he will come and receive us to himself, that where he is, we may also be.

SECTION III.

HEAVEN UNSEEN AND UNFELT AROUND US.

There is another theory or conjecture offered by the same writer,* which will, no doubt, strike the reader with still greater surprise. According to this conjecture, it is considered probable that the spirit world is unseen and unfelt around us. "That within the space occupied by the visible and ponderable universe, and on all sides of us, there is existing and moving, another element, fraught with another species of life—corporeal indeed, and various in its orders, but not open to the cognizance of those who are confined to the conditions of animal organization—not to be seen, nor to be heard, nor to be felt by man. Our present conjecture—remarks the author in another place—reaches to the extent of supposing that within the space encircled by the sidereal revolutions, there exists and moves a second universe, not less real than the one we are at present conversant with; a universe elaborate in structure, and replete with life; life agitated with momentous interests, and perhaps by frivolous interests; a universe conscious perhaps of the material spheres, or unconscious of them, and firmly believing (as we do) *itself* to be the only reality. Our planets in their sweep do not perforate the structure of this invisible creation; our suns do not scorch its plains: for the two collateral systems are not connected by any active affinities."

* Physical Theory of another Life, chap. 17.

This would bring “the things which are not seen,” indeed near to us and around us. To enter the other world would not be so much a removal in space as just to be made loose from, or to become insensible to, the conditions of this life. Death will be only the destruction or disappearance of human and earthly affinities, and directly we shall be surrounded by affinities adapted to our new state of existence, and shall find for ourselves a congenial home in and around our present habitation.

Much is argued in favour of this theory. It is said in no place to interfere with scripture, but rather to be countenanced by incidental hints and allusions. It is said to be made highly probable by the known truths of physical science. An unseen world, in all respects material, inhabited by corporeal beings, it is said, is possible. There are material elements which are not cognizable to any of our senses, except by a round of research and experiment, and then only in their remote effects, as, for instance, electricity. The atmosphere also, and light, are material, and yet so subtle as almost entirely to evade our unassisted observation ; and may there not be still others as yet to us unknown ? We are related to, and become acquainted with, the external world by the medium of the five senses ; but who will say that there are not other senses hidden in possibility in our nature which may by means of other affinities communicate with a world far more refined in its constitution, with which we cannot now come in contact ? Science has discovered living animalculæ in the solidest substances ; the air we breathe, and the water we drink, are the homes

of myriads of beings, and though unseen by the naked eye, these elements are swarming with miniature life! It seems to be God's motto, "*multum in parvo*" —life in life, world in world, universe in universe! With these known facts in science before us, may we not, it is asked, consider the above theory probable?

It is farther supposed that this invisible world around us is the after stage of the present life; and as it is a stage of being in all respects superior to this, it may be that its inhabitants have a knowledge of us, though we have not of them, just as we are acquainted with grades of animalcule life beneath us, when it can hardly be supposed that they know any thing of our existence. Hence, too, in some exceptive cases it may be possible for them to break through the veil of separation and appear in various ways unto men on the platform of human life. In this way we might account for the various appearances of supernatural beings which are reported by popular belief, and which are in some cases substantiated by evidences almost too strong to be set aside. The origin of presentiments and tokens is also accounted for on this supposition. Thus, also, the dead which appeared in Jerusalem at the resurrection of Christ may be supposed to have crowded too earnestly upon the precincts of sublunary life, and thus passed in upon it in their astonishment and joy. Then we are indeed "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses" who stand around, or bend over us, and look with deep interest upon the struggle of life, and when they see it unequal in the case of the saints, they break through in

their ardour, and become ministering spirits to those who are heirs of eternal life.

The kingdom of Satan, on the same supposition, may be considered as unseen around us. Then he is called with propriety the “ prince of the power of the air” and the “ ruler of the darkness of this world.” In this way wicked spirits of men, having entered into affinity with the kingdom of Satan, may aid him in carrying out his hellish malice against men. Those demoniacal possessions so common in the days of Christ, and perhaps still more common than we imagine, though not so palpable, may be considered as the intrusion of wicked spirits into the sphere of human life. We know that good spirits, evil spirits, and men are in a real contest with each other, and why not suppose them to be really near each other in space? We know that the wind, though unseen, bloweth where it listeth, when we see its effects; why not conclude, on the same principle, that this contest, the fact of which is so evident, is carried on by beings existent in the same field of space?

It is also supposed that these beings, in the world unseen, may have capacities to communicate with the remotest inhabitants of God’s universe. The facilities of communication may be so great in these ethereal climes, that space is annihilated, and the different hosts of intelligences in the wide universe may commune with each other and God, as one family in their “father’s house.” Caught up, as it were, by the inspiration of the idea, the author exclaims—“ might we then rest for a moment upon an animating conception such as this, namely, that the field of the visible

universe is the theatre of a vast social economy, holding rational intercourse at great distances. Let us claim leave to indulge the belief, when we contemplate the starry heavens, that speech, inquiry, and response, commands and petitions, debate and instruction, are passing to and fro ; or shall the imagination catch the pealing anthem of praise, at stated periods arising from worshippers in all quarters, and flowing on with a thundering power, like the noise of many waters, until it meet and shake the court of the central heavens !”

Here let us stop in astonishment and wonder at the things which the human mind imagines and contrives in reference to its future home. The deep earnestness in which it bends over its eternal destiny, if it serves for nothing else, is a strong evidence of its immortality. It shows also that it is ready to open its eyes with admiration and gratitude upon the blessed scenes of the future life, whatever be their nature, where God shall cause them to pass before his redeemed saints in another world. Before the light of revelation, however, this sublime structure of fancy and speculation vanishes like the mist of the morning.

It does violence to the scriptural idea exhibited in the first chapter, that the future abode of the blest is distant in space from this present world. This idea brings it immediately around us, and to enter it, it is not so much necessary to remove through space as to lay down the present conditions of life, to become insensible to and free from its affinities. Death, according to this idea, is as when one lies down to sleep in

a room of a certain form and furnished with certain furniture ; but during sleep the whole room and furniture is changed, and he awakes to new scenes, and in the midst of new relations, without changing his position. If this be so, what need, we may ask, was there then for Elijah to be removed visibly from the earth upwards through the air to heaven ? Why did the chariots of Israel cleave the heavens and carry their precious treasure beyond the reach of sight ? Why did the risen Saviour disappear from the sight of his disciples, going up “ far above all heavens ? ”

It makes also the future abode more ethereal than is warranted from Scripture. We have seen in chapter I., that heaven must be not only material, but tangible even to our sight. The Saviour being there, with the same body in which he appeared to his disciples and others after his resurrection, and which he carried away with him in their sight to heaven, is a proof that heaven, where he now is in his body, must be a place, as tangible to the sense of sight, as his body itself was. Here we see, that while Christ was in his resurrection body and his disciples not, he was tangible to them ; for they saw him, felt him, and heard him speak. Here we have the Saviour standing in the conditions and affinities of the eternal world with his glorified resurrection body, and the disciples standing in the affinities and conditions of this life, and yet they were tangible to each other. This, according to this theory, could not be, for the two worlds, though in and through each other, are supposed to stand in no active affinities to each other. If, therefore, what is said here and in chapter I.,

about the nature of heaven, rest on good ground, then this theory cannot be true.

Besides all this, it grates on the feelings of one familiar with the Scripture representations of heaven, and sounds wild and unnatural to a deeply pious Christian consciousness. There seems, to say the least, something undesirable, if not repugnant to our hopes, in the idea that at death we are to be launched forth into a world with no other material substratum but ether, or something still more subtle and refined. No, rather let us call back our minds from the superstitious and ideal to what is more real, and therefore better suited to the bent which our existence has received, from all previous habit, while connected with such bodies as we now have, and resident in a world like the present. In the language of the author of this theory, in another place, let us "bring our religious conceptions into definite alliance with the real world, and with nature, and break up a little those vague and powerless notions which place our religious expectation at a dim remoteness from whatever is substantial and effective. Let us try to persuade ourselves that the future and unseen world, with all its momentous transactions, is as simply natural and true as is this world of land and water, trees and houses, with which now we have to do."

SECTION IV.

THE SUDDEN CREATION OF A HEAVEN.

We have another theory from the same source,* which may be briefly stated. It supposes "that the visible universe, replete every where with various forms of animal life, is to fill one period only in the great history of the moral system, and that it is destined, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to disappear and to return to its nihility, giving place to new elements and to new and higher expressions of omnipotence and intelligence."

It is said that the visible universe exists only by the will of God, and that to destroy it, is only for him to will that its existence shall cease. The same word of power, which spake it out of nothing, can bid it return. Indeed, he need not exert any power to destroy it, he need only cease to support it and it will vanish like smoke. Should he just withdraw his sustaining power, the solid spheres would disappear as the flame of a taper disappears when sunk into gas. Life being perfectly above and superior to matter, would sustain no injury, not even a shock. Silently as fog disappears before and around the traveller, and leaves a world of glory around him without disturbing him at all, so silently but more suddenly would the conditions and affinities of the present life disappear, and the spirit be unclothed of the mortal and clothed upon by the immortal. Thus, at the last day, in the

* Chapter 18.

very place of the present universe, would spring up another, in no sense the same as this, constructed not out of this, but of matter entirely new. "Let then the material universe vanish silent and unnoticed as a dream, or let it melt with fervent heat, and pass away as in a painful struggle and convulsion 'with a great noise ;' in either case, all minds, rational and moral, shall emerge from the mighty ruin and float clear and untouched above the terrors of nature's dying day. Mind shall shake itself of the corruptible and soluble elements, and shall put on incorruption : it shall lay down the dishonour of its union with the inert masses of the material world, take leave of death, and be clothed with immortality."

As to that part of this conjecture which affirms the passing away of the visible universe, at least our own system, it is only what the Scriptures plainly assert ; but to the sudden reconstruction of another in its place, as a heaven for the saints, there are formidable scriptural objections. The whole appears more like magic than like God's work.

The Scriptures teach that the inheritance of the saints was prepared before the foundation of the world. (Matt. xxiv.) It is now reserved in heaven. (1 Pet. i. 4.) The Saviour declares, that there *are* many mansions in his Father's house, and that he would prepare, or set them in order before his second coming, and his second coming will be, according to the Scripture, before the present heavens and earth shall depart and be no more.

This theory also, to be consistent, takes for granted that all the souls of men shall, *at one time*, leave this

world and enter upon the other, namely, at the time when the present universe disappears and the other takes its place. It provides for those, it is true, who shall live at his coming, but not for those who have left the world before. Where are they until the construction of this new universe is effected? It involves the absurdity that the Saviour in his human body, the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, as well as the spirits of all the dead saints, have at present no home, at least no permanent one, and are awaiting in some temporary abode the creation of this fancied universe. The Saviour, however, declares that where he is—in the midst of that glory which he had with his Father before the foundation of the world—thither he will take us to behold that glory, and that there we shall be ever with him. Those that have overcome and are now in paradise, “go no more out” into a place that shall be hereafter created for them.

Such are theories, probably to us seemingly scientific deductions, supported by allusions and by figurative and prophetic language of Scripture; but who that has proper reverence for clear and positive revelation, and modesty in looking into things not seen, can follow in the confidence of faith and consolations of hope, in so strange and wild a track? These are our thoughts, and on that account they may be pleasant to us, for we are prone to love our own children better than others; but “my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

SECTION V.

THE RENOVATION OF THIS EARTH.

We come now to a theory which is extensively held in the Christian world, and which is professedly based on Scripture. This will demand more extensive and critical attention. According to this theory, this earth on which we now dwell will be the future abode of the righteous. As the old world, at the deluge, was destroyed by water, so the world which now is, will, after Christ's second coming, be destroyed, or rather purified by fire from the effects of the curse which was passed upon the ground on account of sin and renovated into its original Eden-like beauty and glory, and thus become the eternal habitation of redeemed man.

In favour of this theory, an argument from reason is adduced. It is said that when man sinned and fell, the physical world sympathized in the terrible ruin which was consequent.

*“Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of wo,
That all was lost.”*

And it is thought reasonable that the physical world, being sharer in the fall, should also become sharer with man in the restoration. It is true, the ground, by which we may, no doubt, understand the whole material world, was cursed with man in consequence of the fall; but, to argue that it must necessarily also become sharer with him in his renovation, is not sound logic. The argument proves too much, and therefore it proves nothing. With the same propriety might we

argue, that because in the fall death passed upon all men, therefore all men must necessarily be restored together. This would carry the advocates of this theory to conclusions which they would not themselves admit, and which flatly contradict God's word, and the strong main stream of the church's testimony in all ages.

The principal ground, however, upon which this theory is rested is Scripture passages. The principal of these we will now proceed to examine, and the reader will, no doubt, find that this, like all other strange out-of-the-way notions, is supported rather by the *sound* than by the *sense* of scripture.

The first passage to which we refer, and the one in which this doctrine is supposed to be stated in the clearest manner, is 2 Peter iii. 13. Here the apostle, after having spoken of the end of the world, and the final judgment, when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth with all the works that are therein shall be burnt up, adds: "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." With regard to this passage, it may be remarked that the context very strongly discountenances such a theory, and is anything but calculated to lead the mind to receive from the passage such an impression. The whole language and spirit gives us the idea that *destruction*, and not *change*, awaits this world. In the fifth and sixth verses, where the fate of the old world which perished and that of the world which now is, is spoken of in connexion, these two events are not spoken of as parallel, but in

contrast to each other. It is not said, *as* the old world perished *so* shall this. The language puts these two events in contrast, showing that a different kind of perishing awaits the latter. “The world that then was, being *overflowed* with water, perished, BUT the heavens and the earth, which are now by the same word, are kept in store,” to be renovated? No!—“reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” Farther on we are told, that while “the heavens shall *pass away* with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be *burned up*.” Other language of a similar kind is contained in this chapter. Now, while we admit that this language does not necessarily imply entire annihilation, we contend, at the same time, that it leads more naturally to that idea than to the idea of change or renovation.

Further, it may be remarked that the expression, “new heavens and a new earth,” is evidently figurative, just as much as the expression “wherein dwelleth righteousness” is figurative. Righteousness can only be said to dwell at any place in a figurative sense. The expression indicates an important and joyful change which awaits the righteous at the close of this present economy. While the present world is destroyed, an abode of righteousness will be provided for them. In the midst of the dreadful ruin which shall come over the earth and ungodly men at the last day because of sin, the righteous, as heirs according to a promise, shall not share in that destruction, nor be forsaken in it. Though the heavens depart above

them, they shall not be left shelterless, for he will overshadow them with a new heaven. Though the earth be burnt up beneath their feet, they shall not be left to sink into the general perdition without a foundation on which to stand, or without a home in which to live, for he will provide for them a habitation far superior; one pure from vicissitude and sinful defilements, one ever new and perennial in beauty and holiness, “wherein dwelleth righteousness!”

Again: these “new heavens and a new earth” are expected “according to his promise.” It will be difficult for the advocates of the earth’s renovation to point out the place where God has given us such a promise. Promises of a father’s house prepared in heaven from the foundation of the world, and of a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and such like, are numerous; but promises of a purification by fire and physical renovation of this globe on which we now live, as the future abode of the saints, are much fewer than angels’ visits, and farther between. The only passages in the whole Bible which have any resemblance even in sound to such a promise are those written in Is. lxv. 17, 18; lxvi. 22. The first of these will abundantly show what idea is to be attached to the figurative expression, “new heavens and a new earth.” The passage runs thus: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create:” and then he tells us what it is that he creates, and it is certainly not a heaven out of this earth, for the abode of the saints—“For, behold, I

create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people." This shows not only that the language of the promise is figurative,* but it points out also distinctly to what the promise refers, so that the new heaven and the new earth are declared to be nothing else than "Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy"—a joyful time for his saints! In the preceding context he declares that he will number the wicked to the sword and make them bow down to the slaughter, and that while he does this he will distinguish his own people in mercy and with blessings; rejoicing and gladness shall be among them in Jerusalem, as if a new heaven and a new earth had clothed itself in beauty around them. In like manner, also, while the world shall be consumed at the last day, and ungodly men are overthrown in their sins and consigned to their merited perdition, a new world of righteousness, and consequently of joy and peace, shall receive the righteous. This is all that the promise embodies, according to which the apostle comforts and encourages himself and his brethren to expect a new heaven and a new earth; and could he exhibit to their hopes anything so rich in blessed consolation as this?

A similar passage to this, to which frequent reference is also made in support of this theory, is found in Rev. xxi. 1, et seq. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea," etc.

* "The phrases, *new heavens and new earth*, etc., are used to denote the welfare and returning prosperity of states: for example, Is. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22."—Knapp's Theo. vol. 2, page 647.

From what has been said about the passages in Peter and Isaiah, it will not now be denied that this is also figurative. Besides, if this is taken literally, then the whole chapter must be taken literally, and this would make strange work indeed! In this chapter we have represented to us the glorious and happy state of the church in the last stage of its earthly triumphs at the close of the millennial period, the ushering in of which is proclaimed in such glowing raptures in the previous chapter. What the exact nature of that period shall be we do not now precisely know, but prophecies of it are abundant, and in prospect of it, the spirit of prophecy always kindles up into a glow of joyful exultation. We may easily suppose, however, that when the church of God shall return from the field of her latest strife and victory, shall stand forth adorned and leaning as a bride upon her Beloved, and when heaven and earth shall meet to celebrate with joyful anthems her eternal jubilee, we shall see the propriety of calling that day the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. In the light and joy of that day, the heavens will smile in lovelier brightness, and the earth will put on the beauty of Eden.

The sense of this passage in its whole connexion and import will become still more clear, from an examination of the context, commencing at the seventh verse of the preceding chapter; then it will also be seen why this holy city is represented as coming down from God out of heaven. The reader will observe that two cities are spoken of. The "beloved city," in chap. xx. 9, which is on earth, and the "holy city," coming

down from heaven afterwards, chap. xxi. 2. I look upon these as denoting the militant and triumphant branches of the church. With this in mind, let us attend to a connected exposition of the whole passage, and see if all will not become clear and natural.

At the close of this glorious millennial reign, when the time comes for the final winding up of all terrestrial things; when the church militant has encamped in full panoply, waiting to be marched into its triumphal state, then the devil will make one more desperate sally against it. The powers of hell will then be marched against it from the four corners of the earth. This army, figuratively called Gog and Magog, will be numerous as the sands of the sea. They march boldly up and encompass the saints who lie encamped in the beloved city, viz., the church of God militant. Now, however, the Lord appears for his beloved saints, the mighty army of the enemy is devoured by fire from God out of heaven, and the devil, who was their leader and deceived them, is taken and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to reap his bitter reward for ever and ever. Meanwhile there appears, perhaps in the clouds, a great white throne and one sitting on it. Before his glorious face the heavens and earth fly away, so that there is no place found for them—that is, they are swept into nothing. In the mean time, the dead, small and great, rise from the receding and departing world—the sea heaves back, and hell yields up her dead. Now, the heavens and earth departed, but the white throne remaining, the Judge will sit upon it, the books will be opened, and the final judgment will begin. The saints, having

been judged and found worthy to enter that place prepared for them from the foundation of the world, are now ready and waiting to be conducted thither. Who shall escort them? Hear it, oh heavens! “The holy city, New Jerusalem”—that is, the whole church triumphant—shall come down from God out of heaven, as did the chariots of Israel for Elijah. The new Jerusalem, the holy city, or church triumphant, and the “beloved city,” or church militant, composed of the saints that are alive at his coming, now visibly and completely united, (1 Thess. iv. 17,) constitute the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, which has now made herself ready. The Bridegroom’s tarrying time having now ended, the church, “caught up together *with them* in the clouds,” meet their Lord “in the air.” The holy nuptials are consummated, and now the blessed home-bringing must follow! They ascend in triumph, and amid raptures of eternal love, to the “place prepared!” In the Father’s house of many mansions, they are received with holy joy. The Father smiles—the marriage feast is prepared—angels clap their wings with emotions of bliss unfelt before—all heaven exclaims: “Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come!”

This may suffice as an exposition of these passages of shadowy prophetic import. Should this not seem to be satisfactory to the reader, I would remind him that both passages are prophecy, and that it is precarious to build a positive doctrine on prophecy, when there is no literal scripture to be its foundation and support; and especially when there is, as I shall hereafter show, so much direct evidence in scripture against it.

Another passage, which is supposed to teach this earth-heaven theory, is Rom. viii. 19—24. This passage is confessedly dark, and has not, as yet, come clearly into the consciousness of the church. The key to it has not yet been found, and, consequently, it can be of but little weight in favour of a thing that stands otherwise on such sandy ground. To show how doubtful is its meaning, I will quote a few passages from two learned biblical critics. “There is considerable difficulty in this passage,” says Dr. A. Clark, “and the difficulty lies chiefly in the meaning of the word *η κτισις*, which we translate *the creature*, and *creation*. Some think that by it the *brute creation* is meant, others apply it to the *Jewish people*, others to the *godly*, others to the *Gentiles*, others to the *good angels*, and others to the *fallen spirits*, both *angelic* and *human*. Dissertations without end have been written on it; and it does not appear that the Christian world are come to any general agreement on the subject.” Another learned critic, Dr. Bloomfield, says: “There is perhaps no passage of the apostle more difficult than the present, or on which the opinions of commentators are more various.”

A modern advocate of this theory who makes this passage the foundation of a small book on the “Perpetuity of the Earth,” says to his readers: “You will be able to form some faint idea of the perplexity and confusion, when we assure you that the single word which occurs *four* times, and is in our version *thrice* translated *creature*, and *once creation*, has been understood by some to mean “the lower animals—the brute creation;” while by another class of interpreters it is

supposed that “the Jews” is intended; and by another, “the Gentiles;” some again choose to refer it generally to “the saints;” others to “the wicked;” some to “the holy angels,” and others to “the devils.” It is strange, that after all this, the author was not afraid to venture himself to “give that view of the whole passage, which appeared to him, after a somewhat careful examination of all the theories, by far the most obvious, and the best.”

I do not intend to enter upon an exposition of this difficult passage myself; my object in quoting the above is simply to show that the light of the church has not yet risen so high as to shine into this deep place in divine things. Some future stadium of the church will no doubt furnish the key to this, as well as to all other obscure passages of the holy record. As yet, therefore, this passage cannot be used with any force in favour of a theory which other plain parts of the Bible show to stand on doubtful ground.

The following passages are also quoted to support this theory: Eph. vi. 23, Heb. i. 6, ii. 5—9, Is. xxxvii. 17, Ps. xxxvii., and xxvii. 13, Matt. v. 5, Rev. v. 9, 10. It would carry me too far, and in too devious a way, to point out the manner in which these passages are supposed to support this doctrine. If anything like it is taught in them, the reader will no doubt find it; if it is so dark and obscure that it cannot be found, unless it be specially pointed out, it cannot be of much weight. It may be proper to remark, that those who quote these passages have found it necessary to translate some of them anew, and to explain others by the Old Testament, in order to tor-

ture them into testimony to favour the idea of the perpetuity of the earth. Stubborn truth needs twisting by those who do not love it in its straight and pure form.

It is remarkable, too, that the greatest number of passages by which the doctrine of the earth's renovation is supposed to be established, if they are not figurative, prophetic language, are either in the Old Testament, or such as are quoted in the New from the Old. Now, those in the Old Testament which speak of the earth as the inheritance of the saints, have, of course, a spiritual reference to future blessings, of which these earthly ones are typical. Canaan, which was emphatically *the land* of blessed inheritance, was typical of the heavenly Canaan. The possession of Canaan, in which they were placed by Joshua, was not the final object of their hopes, and was not so understood. "For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." That this rest is not on the earth, and that it was not by the Jews believed that it ever would be, is evident from the fact, that those who were in pursuit of it "confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country—they desire a better country, that is a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he *hath prepared* for them a city."

Those passages, which, in the New Testament, are quoted from the Old, are intended to convince the Jews that the new dispensation, which the apostle

preached, was that foretold and promised in the Jewish scriptures, for which their fathers had looked and waited. Can we for a moment believe that when the apostles, in argument with the Jews, quoted from the Old Testament, it was their object to convince them of the earth's renovation? Would he endeavour to convince them of that which is to be the crowning result of Christ's mission into the world, before they were convinced of his mission at all? Certainly there was something else for the apostles to do first, namely, to convince the unbelieving of the truth and nature of Christ's divine mission into the world, and for this purpose they quoted those passages, Heb. i. 6, ii. 5—9.

This theory, even at the bar of sound reason, stands condemned. Would not the surface of the earth, even if there were no more sea, be too small to be the theatre of enjoyments for the sacramental host? Even in the days of the apostle Paul, the spiritual seed of Abraham was like “the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable. These all died in faith.” In that time of fearful apostasy, when Elijah looked out from Horeb upon Israel's desolate and forsaken altars, and when he believed that he *alone* was left a friend of God on earth, there were seven thousand that had not bowed their knees to Baal, nor kissed his image. How great, even in the darkest times, is the hidden seed! We must still include all that shall die in Christ to the end of time, including the time of Zion's wonderful harvest-time, which the prophets tell us will come in her future history, when children shall be

born of her like the dew-drops of the morning! Ps. ex. 3.* To this must be added, also, the countless numbers of infants that have died, and shall still die to the end of time, in Christian and heathen lands. It is known that one-half of the human race die before they are seven years of age, and the most of these under one year. To swell this number, the inhuman and wicked practice of infant sacrifice in heathen lands, largely contributes. Take all these considerations together, and how does it swell before us the mighty aggregate of those who shall fill those many mansions which are prepared for them! Shall such a host, even if this globe could entertain them, be for ever imprisoned on this little earth?—to gaze with unsatisfied wonder and astonishment out upon the immeasurable plain of God's universe, like a captive in a grated cell?

The scriptures represent heaven as the place where not only saints shall be, but angels and Christ, and other holy intelligences, all in one great happy society—in that place which is God's peculiar dwelling-place. Can we believe that this insignificant earth, comparatively only an atom in the known universe of God, will be that place? Does not the following language seem to imply that the author was of opinion that this earth is the greatest of God's worlds, and that all worlds which roll amid the

“—dread magnificence of heaven,”

are only glistening diamonds stuck into the sky?
“Then we say that this earth of ours, cleansed from

*German translation.

the blood and tears of many generations, and exulting in the smile of the Eternal, shall be—not heaven merely—but the very centre and shrine of heaven!"

This, and all the foregoing theories, do violence to the scripture representations of heaven at various points. They rob heaven of much of its grandeur in our eyes, throw a check upon our hopes, and unhinge many of our oldest and happiest associations—such associations too as God by his own revelation, obviously interpreted, has implanted and wrought into our hearts. God, so far as he has revealed unto us the nature of our future home, does certainly not intend to deceive us; and so far as the Holy Spirit has interpreted that revelation to the pious inquiry of God's children, he has not misled them; and so far, therefore, as ardent longings and blessed hopes have been excited and cherished in our hearts, they will not be disappointed. These tender associations which have ever, like a sweet home-thought, been twining themselves around every upward aspiration of our hearts, and the general feeling of the church on this subject, must not be set aside by theories founded on scientific probabilities, or on the sound of scripture language. It must not be believed that that heaven which has so long floated in cherished glory before the pious wisdom of humble faith, will at last turn out to be but an idle myth, that magnified itself into such unearthly glory in the twilight of pious ignorance!

I will now offer some positive scriptural reasons why this theory of the earth's renovation is not to be entertained, which will also show at the same time that heaven is a place *now prepared*, in some remote

part of God's universe, to which all the saints will at last be taken to be for ever its happy inhabitants. If this be established, it will also serve still more effectually to overthrow all those other conjectures and theories, which are presented in the former part of this chapter.

It may be remarked first, as in a previous chapter, that the general impression which one gets from reading the scriptures, is, that heaven is a place separate and removed from the earth. This is the first and most natural idea which any unprejudiced mind will get from the scriptures on this subject. God would not make his revelation so plainly, generally, and naturally teach one thing, when something quite different was the truth. The theory of the earth's purification and perpetuity is unnatural to a mind versed in scripture, and is only gained as the result of curious speculation.

The Saviour, when he was about to leave the world, said to his disconsolate disciples: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 2, 3.

1. Here he speaks of a place which he calls his "Father's house." Now, in no proper sense can this earth be called the peculiar residence of God. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens." Ps. ciii. 19. "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." Ps. cxxiii. 1. The Father's house, then, is not on the earth, but in the heavens.

2. In this Father's house are "many mansions." What exactly is to be understood by this expression, is not particularly important here; it is enough to remark that it could in no intelligent sense be applied to this earth. This earth is his footstool.

3. In this abode *are* many mansions already *prepared*, whereas, according to the theory of the earth's renovation, the place which the blest are to occupy as their final abode is *not yet prepared*, but shall be at the end of the world.

4. After this place is prepared, he will come again; but according to this theory, it is to be prepared *after* his second coming.

5. In order to prepare that place, he *goes away* from the earth, and when it is prepared, he *comes* again to the earth. This shows plainly that it is away from the earth.

6. He comes to the earth in order to receive his people to himself, that where he is they may be. This language plainly implies that he will take them away from the earth to that place which he has prepared for them. This is also confirmed by other passages which allude to this subject; for when he comes, they "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 17. They shall be with him where he is, to behold the glory which he had with his Father, not on earth, certainly, for that was the theatre of his humiliation; but that glory which he enjoyed with him in his Father's house, in which glory all his saints in the future life shall be the happy sharers.

When the Saviour disappeared from the sight of men, to go to his Father, or to heaven, he went away from the earth ; for he was seen by the disciples going up from Mount Olivet, till a cloud received him out of sight. (Acts i. 10, 11.) The Apostle Paul tells us that he “ascended up, far above all heavens.” Eph. iv. 10. Nothing is clearer than that the Saviour’s ascension into heaven was a removal from the earth. “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world, and go to the Father.” John xvi. 28. Paul was “caught up to the third heaven—into paradise.” 2 Cor. xii. The patriarchs, according to Paul, confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and by making this confession, they declared plainly that they sought a country, (Fatherland !) Canaan was not what they sought, but they “desired a better country, that is a heavenly : wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he *hath prepared* for them a city.” Here, again, the future abode of the blest is said to be already prepared. “We know, then, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” 2 Cor. v. 1.

That heaven is a place now existing, somewhere away from the earth, is also evident from the fact that heaven—the third heaven, or abode of God and the blest—and the earth, are frequently placed in juxtaposition in the same sentence. “Behold, the heaven, and the *heaven of heavens*, is the Lord’s, thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.” Deut. x. 14. “Whom have I in *heaven* but thee ? and there is none

upon earth that I desire besides thee." Ps. lxxiii. 25. "Thy will be done on *earth* as it is in *heaven*." Matt. vi. 10. This shows that heaven, where God exhibits his special glory, where angels and holy men are, is a place now existing, distinct and separate from the earth. There the throne of the great Eternal is established for ever, and so far from changing it for the earth, and making it "the very centre and shrine of heaven," he calls the earth, in holy derision, "his footstool!" The scriptures represent it as an instance of great condescension that the incarnate God should descend to earth on a mission of mercy, and it is to the Psalmist a matter of great surprise that God should be "mindful" of man on the earth; but according to this theory we are to believe that the theatre on which his humiliation and condescension are displayed, shall also be the theatre on which he can best display his incomprehensible and eternal greatness and glory!

The learned Bishop Pierson* has quite a different idea of our Father's house, and our future home. "This house of God, though uniform, yet is not all of the same materials, the footstool and the throne are not of the same mould; there is a vast difference between the heavenly expansions. This first aereal heaven, where God setteth up his pavilion, where 'he maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind,' is not so far inferior in place as it is in glory to the next, the seat of the sun and moon, the two great lights, and stars innumerable, far greater than the one of them. And yet that second

* Exposition of the Creed, p. 75.

heaven is not so far above the first as beneath the 'third,' (2 Cor. xii. 2,) into which Paul was caught. The brightness of the sun doth not so far surpass the blackness of a wandering cloud, as the glory of that heaven of presence surmounts the fading beauty of the starry firmament. For in this great temple of the world, in which the Son of God is the High-priest, the heaven which we see is but the veil, and that which is above, the Holy of Holies. This veil, indeed, is rich and glorious, but one day to be rent, and then to admit us into a far greater glory, even to the mercy-seat and cherubim!"

The question still arises, where is heaven? and our answer still continues. The scriptures, as we have seen, speak of heaven as "up on high." We know, however, that up and down are merely relative terms; what is up on one side of the globe, is down on the other. If the earth be round—as we know it to be—then up can only mean away from the earth, and down, towards its centre. The expression "up on high," will, therefore, convey a wrong idea to us, unless we understand it only to mean away from the earth. This we may say then as certain, that heaven being on high, is away from the earth.

The Jews had three heavens. First, the regions of the air, where the clouds move, and the birds fly. Second, the regions of the stars, which form, apparently, a spangled concave above us. Third, the realms invisible beyond the first and second heavens. The Saviour ascended "far above all heavens," consequently beyond the third. Not only above all heavens, but *far* above them. "He passed into the hea-

vens." Heb. iv. 14. "He entered into that within the veil." Heb. vi. 19. "Into the holy place." Heb. ix. 12. Exclaims the learned and pious Bishop Pearson, " Whatsoever heaven there is higher than all the rest which are called heavens ; whatsoever sanctuary is holier than all which are called holies ; whatsoever place is of greatest dignity in all those courts above, into that place did he ascend, where in the splendour of his Deity he was, before he took upon himself our humanity." Thither we can only follow him by the eye of faith. We learn from this, then, for certain, that in none of the planets or stars, visible or invisible, in what is called the second heaven, is to be sought the final abode of the blest, but it is far beyond them.

Again : heaven is the same place which is the proper home of all God's holy intelligences, whether principalities or powers, angels or men. Jerusalem of old was the home of assembly, whither all the tribes went up, the place where the Shekinah of God's presence abode between the cherubim in the holiest place, the place where his presence was felt, and his glory shone forth as it did no where else on earth ;—so heaven is the great antitype of that Holy City ; there God is seen, not in a luminous cloud, but in him who is God manifested in the flesh, as the brightness of the Father's glory ; thither too the tribes of God go up, of all the different ranks, and from all the different dominions of God—THE HOME OF THE UNIVERSE ! There on Mount Zion we shall meet, not only the saints who from the earth, with us, through tribulations deep have laboured up, but we shall come to "an innumerable company of angels, to the gene-

ral assembly and church of the first born—to God, the Judge of all—to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant."

No one can, for a moment, doubt that the scriptures point to a place, existing in some high and far-off region of the universe, which it calls heaven—the throne of God—the imperial Salem—the holy mountain. "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool." "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens." "A glorious high throne, from the beginning, is the place of thy sanctuary." All these passages show that "Jehovah hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." Wherever this place may be, the scriptures constantly allude to it as the high, holy and peaceful region appointed as the eternal home of the sainted dead.

Being content to walk by faith rather than by sight, we should not pursue this subject any farther, did not scripture allusions, and the scientific deductions of astronomy, so strongly unite in recommending to our faith a beautiful suggestion in reference to our eternal home in the skies. "There is," says Dr. Dick, "an astronomical idea, which may help us to form some conception of this "glorious high throne," which is the peculiar residence of the Eternal. It is now considered by astronomers as highly probable, if not certain,—from late observations, from the nature of gravitation, and other circumstances,—that all the systems of the universe revolve round one common centre, and that this centre may bear as great a pro-

portion, in point of magnitude, to the universal assemblage of systems as the sun does to his surrounding planets. And, since our sun is five hundred times larger than the earth and all the other planets and their satellites taken together,—on the same scale, such a central body would be five hundred times larger than all the systems and worlds in the universe. Here, then, may be a vast universe of itself—an example of material creation exceeding all the rest in magnitude and splendour, and in which are blended the glories of every other system. If this is in reality the case, it may, with the most emphatic propriety, be termed THE THRONE OF GOD."

That there are movements and indications in the heavens which favour a supposition like this, all the most learned astronomers agree. "Within the last hundred and fifty years it has been found that the principal fixed stars have a certain apparent motion, which is nearly uniform and regular, and is quite perceptible in the course of thirty or forty years. The star *Areturus*, for example, has been observed to move three minutes and three seconds in the course of seventy-eight years. Most of the stars have moved towards the south. The stars in the northern quarter of the heavens seem to widen their relative positions, while those in the southern appear to contract their distances. These motions seem evidently to indicate that the earth, and all the other bodies of the solar system, are moving in a direction from the stars, in the southern part of the sky, toward those in the northern. Dr. Herschel thinks that a comparison of the changes now alluded to, indicates a motion of

our sun, with his attending planets, towards the constellation Hercules. This progressive movement which our system makes in absolute space is justly supposed to be a portion of that curve which the sun describes around the *centre* of that *nebula* to which he belongs; and that all the other stars, belonging to the same nebula, describe similar curves. And, since the universe appears to be composed of thousands of *nebulæ*, or starry systems, detached from each other, it is reasonable to conclude that all the starry systems of the universe revolve round one common CENTRE, whose bulk and attractive influence are proportionable to the size and the number of the bodies which perform their revolutions around it. We know that the law of gravitation extends its influence from the sun to the planet Herschel, at the distance of eighteen hundred millions of miles, and to the remotest parts of the orbits of the comets, which stretch far beyond this limit; and there is the strongest reason to believe that it forms a connecting bond between all the bodies of the universe, however distant from each other. This being admitted, the *motion* of the different systems now alluded to, and the *immensity* of the central body,—from which motion of every kind originates, to produce the order and harmony of the universe,—appear to be necessary, in order to preserve the balance of the universal system, and to prevent the numerous globes in the universe from gradually approaching each other, in the course of ages, and becoming one universal wreck. We are mechanically connected with the most distants stars visible through our telescopes by means of *light*, which radiates from

those distant luminaries, mingles with the solar rays, penetrates our atmosphere, and affects our optic nerves with the sensation of colours, similar to those produced by the rays of the sun. And we have equal reason to conclude that we are likewise mechanically connected with these bodies by the law of gravitation. So that the idea thrown out above, however grand and overwhelming to our feeble powers, is not a mere conjecture, but is founded on observation, and on the general analogies of the universe."

According to this theory, the scriptural idea of three heavens would be retained, only in a somewhat different form. The *planets* would constitute the first heaven; rising higher, the *suns* around which these planets move, would be the second; and the great central world around which both planets and suns revolve, would be the third, or highest heaven. Into this the apostle was permitted to enter when he was "caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Into this place the Saviour entered when he ascended "far above all heavens;" and in this place we expect, when this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, to find "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"Next to God himself, this is the grandest of all conceptions! This is the most sublime and magnificent idea that can possibly enter into the mind of man. We feel oppressed and overwhelmed in endeavouring to form even a faint representation of it. But, however much it may overpower our feeble con-

ception, we ought not to revolt at the idea of so glorious an extension of the works of God; since nothing less magnificent seems suitable to a Being of infinite perfections. This grand central body may be considered as the CAPITAL of the universe. From this glorious centre, embassies may be occasionally dispatched to all surrounding worlds, in every region of space. Here, too, deputations from all the different provinces of creation, may occasionally assemble, and the inhabitants of different worlds mingle with each other, and learn the grand outlines of those physical operations and moral transactions, which have taken place in their respective spheres. Here may be exhibited to unnumbered multitudes, objects of sublimity and glory, which are no where else to be found within the wide extent of creation. Here, intelligences of the highest order, who have attained the most sublime heights of knowledge and virtue, may form the principal part of the population of this magnificent region. Here, the glorified body of the Redeemer may have taken its principal station, as ‘the head of all principalities and powers:’ and here, likewise, Enoch and Elijah may reside;” and, according to the general tenor of scripture, where God’s throne is, where Christ in his glorified body is, in this royal holy city of the King of kings, there is also the home of the sainted dead.

To those blissful regions the Christian’s heart aspires, with holy and unquenchable ardour; nor does he hope in vain. “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory.” Filled with gratitude for a

prospect so full of bliss, our hearts exclaim : “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven.”

Farewell then, earth, thou land of the curse ! My aspirations are towards the fountain of uncreated light. Farewell ! ye lamps of heaven, ye shall not stay my freed spirit’s upward flight. Far—

Far from these narrow scenes of night,
Unbounded glories rise ;
And realms of infinite delight,
Unknown to mortal eyes.

Borne upon the wings of faith, we might attempt to follow the track of the Saviour’s ascension, or that of the chariots of Israel in which Elijah went up—but alas ! let us not attempt it in the body.

Here, then, we rest in the patience of hope, and in the assurance of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen. This, however, we know, that when once the signal for our departure is given, our emancipated spirits shall cleave the air, as Christ and Elijah did ; passing through the first heaven, the earth, its sinful abode, shall dwindle into nothing behind us. The second heaven, also, with its planets, suns, and systems, stretching far beyond the reach of human thought, will soon fade back into dim space. Now, the third heaven will stretch before us, onward and upward, its eternal plains ! Faint and far before, but drawing nearer and nearer, appears the Holy City ;

soon its twelve shining foundations, from which the battlements of blazing jasper tower upwards, are scaled—the portals of light are crossed—and now to the soul's enraptured gaze the heaven of heavens stretches broader and higher its boundless realms, through uncreated light!

AMEN—HALLELUJAH! COME, LORD JESUS, COME
QUICKLY.

CHAPTER III.

Do the Saints at Death pass immediately into Heaven?

Tread softly ! bow the head,
In reverend silence bow !
No passing bell doth toll
Yet an immortal soul
Is passing now.

O change ! O wondrous change !
Burst are the prison bars !
This moment there—so low
In mortal prayer—and now
 Beyond the stars !

O change ! stupendous change !
Here lies the senseless clod ;
The soul from bondage breaks,
The new immortal wakes—
 Walks with his God !

IN yonder quiet room, shaded with the mellow twilight of mourning and sorrow, lies a dying saint. Weeping friends crowd around, with hearts that know to feel a parting anguish, waiting for the last breath—the last word has already been heard. Though patience does not permit the utterance of even a sigh or look of complaint, yet the lineaments of exquisite bodily

agony are drawn upon the face. But see! the last ebb of life begins to recede from mortal shores. The pulse and breathing are feeble and slow—he dies! The features, before distorted with pain, relax and sink into a sweet pleasantness. The spirit has gone!—WHERE IS IT!

Has it plumed its wing for heaven, and is it now—the moment after death—soaring away on its shining track toward the fountain of uncreated and imperishable light and bliss? Will this child of God, thus set free from its earthly captivity, stop in its way before it reaches its Father's house? Is it in any way, or for any time, detained?—The spirit of my dear friend which has just now waved me his last earthly farewell, whose tenantless body lies motionless before me, must be somewhere—oh where? I look around me and all is silent. The hearth, the room, the accustomed walks of life, all mourn his absence. I feel as though that form must meet me again, which met me before; and, forgetting, I hold my breath, and place my finger upon my lips, to hear that voice once more, or to be joyfully surprised by his coming footsteps. In the dreadful stillness of the twilight hour, I close my eyes, and fancy brings him, but when I open my eyes the sweet delusion flies. I look toward the radiant heaven in the star-lit hour, and still my heart inquires, Where is that spirit now?

Who will forbid me these earnest inquiries? Who, that can, will refuse to answer them? It is not in the nature of refined social being, neither does the spirit of Christianity allow it, that our interest in those we learned to love should cease when they die. If the

Marys committed no sin in seeking the tomb of their beloved Lord "very early, when it was yet dark," with "sweet spices," to anoint his body, asking, with tears, where they had laid him, it cannot be sinful for us to ask, even with tearful anxiety, where are the spirits of our departed dead?

On this subject, as on the question, Where is heaven? there have been many bewildering theories. It is necessary to review these, give their history, the ground on which they rest, and the objections which are seen to stand against them, when viewed from the scriptural ground. After this is done, we shall be better prepared to see what the Spirit has said in answer to this interesting inquiry.

The land which lies between these mortal shores and our eternal home is, to the eye of reason, a misty, twilight region, in which the earnest imagination of man has located many strange scenes. It is a land of dubious paths, and of gloomy and cheerless confusion, as long as the day-spring from on high does not shine upon it. If the reader has never travelled much through it, let him stick close to his guide; for he will often, in deep bewilderment, be induced to exclaim, "Watchman, what of the night?" It is, then, a gloomy road; yet gloomy as it is, it will not be in vain to travel in it. We will walk in the radiant highway to Canaan more pleasantly and more gratefully after we have wandered long in the wilderness. After we have tried in vain to make the journey by the unsteady flickerings of human reason and unsanctified imagination, we will try again, taking for our journey "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path."

SECTION I.

THE ANCIENT UNDER WORLD.

A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.
JOB x. 22.

Where are those who die and are gathered to their fathers? The first and simplest ideas on this subject are characteristic of the childhood of the world in which they are found. The place of the dead was conceived of by those who lived in the morning of the world as a dark, indistinct, and dreamy UNDER WORLD. On the subject of their eternal homes, as on all other subjects, their ideas were vague and undefined. As childhood is a time of hope and longing, in which realities are not closely scanned, so in the earlier ages, or childhood of the world, men hoped and longed for a future life by a kind of spiritual instinct, but did not much inquire what was the foundation of their hopes, or the nature of that good for which they longed. We cannot now easily conceive how contracted and floating the ideas of men must have been in that early age, when there was no philosophy to require accurate connexion and consistency in their thoughts. They were children not only in simplicity of manners, but in all their reflections.

The under world was called, in Hebrew, SHEOL, which means a dark region, where one sees nothing. It was supposed to be a place under the earth, or in some unknown region, away from human reach. Here, amid darkness and silence, the dead existed in the

form of mysterious shadows; hence they are called Manes, or shades. This idea rose in their mind in a perfectly natural way. Their friends died, and they put their bodies into caves of the earth, or in vaults constructed by their own hands. Thus the place of the dead was a dark place, and they accordingly called it Sheol—Hades—darkness, where nothing is seen. When they looked into these subterranean caves, they saw not the spirits of the dead, it is true, yet they felt as if the dead were there. The darkness and silence which reigned there were the proper elements for the imagination, and it was easy to people these abodes with spirits.

It was natural, then, in those simple ages, when hope, desire, and imagination were strong and uncontrolled, and judgment and reason weak, that the mind should conceive of these caves as the inlet to an underworld, which naturally also became peopled with the manes of the dead. Thus the patriarch Jacob, mourning for his son, whom he supposed to be dead, says, "I will go down into the grave (Sheol,) unto my son, mourning." Gen. xxxvii. 35. Job, also, in that early, patriarchal age, speaks of the grave whither his grief should bring him, in a similar way. "I go down to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." Job x. 21, 22. Their ideas of heaven, as a place of happiness, and of hell, as a place of misery, not yet having received distinctness in their consciousness, their minds would not go farther into their future history than to these dark and silent regions of the under world.

It is well known that in this early age of the Jewish religion, their ideas of immortality, and consequently of a place of happiness and misery, were very obscure. If at this time the idea of an under world was firmly fixed in their minds and mingled with their hopes, and was longed for as a place where they would again meet their departed friends, and be for ever free from the troubles of earth, it is easy to see how it would keep such a long and firm hold on the human mind in this form. We know how long impressions and associations of childhood remain, and how hard it is to dislodge them in after life. In like manner, the light of mature reason, and even of revelation, could not, for a long time, disperse the agreeable twilight in which the first simple thoughts of man had located the lonely kingdom of the dead. Not only the Hebrews, but other nations also, adopted, loved, and clung to the sweet and innocent delusion. Who would rob them of it without giving them something better?—God did not. The desire by which it was at first created was sweetly prophetic; and the shadows of which it was formed, like all the Jewish typical divinity, was a shadow of good things to come. Is the morning twilight evil because it is succeeded by a bright, rising sun?—Is the shadow evil because it is not as good as the substance? Verily, no. So, also, these shadowy ideas were good in their time, and in their place, and, being good, they are not to be despised simply because they are not better. It is the shadow that leads to the substance; it is the shadow that gives not only the best idea of the nature and form of the substance, but it is also the best evidence that the substance ex-

ists. The beautiful words of the poet, when altered in one word, will still contain one of the deepest of all truths.

*'Tis the twilight of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.*

How sweet the reflection that thus early, and through so many ages of the world's darkness, the pious hopes of men had visions, though it was darkly, of a better land! "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." They saw not, but they believed and longed. The blind beggar turned his sightless balls towards the Saviour; though he does not see him, yet he turns them not that way in vain; for, directed towards the Sun of Righteousness, they are soon filled with light and joy. "We are saved by hope!"

The great entrance to this under world was supposed to be in the extreme west! Accordingly, in Homer's *Odyssey*, the descent of Mercury and the suitors into the shades is thus described:

"And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends;
And now the gates where evening Sol descends,
And Leucas' rock, and ocean's utmost streams;
And now pervade the dusky land of dreams,
And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
In ever-flowing meads of Asphodel.
The empty forms of men inhabit there;
Impassive semblance, images of air!"

Here, where “evening Sol descends,” was the great entrance into the world of spirits; though, no doubt, as before observed, each cave of sepulture was also supposed to stand with it in some mysterious underground connexion. That this grand inlet should be located in the west, is easily accounted for. The world, at that time, was not known as a globe, but only as a vast plain, and even as a plain it was known only to a limited extent. Beyond the world, it was thought, the sun rose and set. As the rising sun was the forerunner of cheerfulness and life, so the setting sun was associated with melancholy thoughts of death and decay. “Where the sun goes down, and his light and fire are extinguished, there, it was naturally supposed, is the place where all things perish, and where darkness reigns.” At the close of day, also, men naturally sink into reflection; the tumults of exciting passion are quieted, thoughts come home, and the longings of the spirit struggle earnestly after the loved and the lost! Hence, how easy it is for the imagination to find its way through the yellow vista of evening into the spirit land; and, as sensible objects sink more and more into the gray twilight, how natural to follow them into that dreamy indistinctness, where all we love come at once around us, and where airy nothing finds a local habitation and a name.

At this time, then, men did not give clear and distinct forms to their thoughts of the place and state of the dead. They spoke and thought in the most general way of Sheol, as the place of departed spirits. As this idea continued for a long time, and was adopted by the early Greeks, they applied to it the Greek

name Hades, which corresponds in meaning with the Hebrew Sheol. Let it be distinctly remembered that these two terms are alike in meaning, and that they are *general* terms. They signify, in their primary sense, the place of departed spirits, *without any reference at all to their condition, as happy or miserable*. It is only necessary to keep in mind this simple fact, in order to avoid that endless confusion into which so many have fallen, who have either not known, or have not attended to, this distinction. The words Sheol and Hades are words of the same general import as the words *eternity* or the *grave*. We say, for instance, that one of our friends has gone to eternity, and, by saying so, we do not intend to express any opinion as to whether he has gone to a place of happiness or misery. We only say, in general, that he has gone to eternity. So the ancients used the terms Sheol and Hades, without having their ideas at all defined as to the place. Sheol was "the place and state of those who are out of sight, out of the way," and to be sought for; and Hades had a similar meaning. If the terms were intended to give a specific idea, it must be put into them by the context. Just as if, after speaking of a wicked man who died in some sudden and awful way, I say, "He was called into a dreadful eternity," you at once understand me to mean that he went to the place of the lost. If I say, of a good man, "He has suffered much on earth, but now he has gone to eternity," you at once understand me to mean that he went to the inheritance of the blest. So these terms are primarily general, and only convey a specific idea, when it is forced upon them by the context.

In time, however, as the world advanced, and when, by successive revelations, eternal things became clearer to the consciousness of mankind, a separation was conceived in this under-world, the good from the wicked. Sheol or Hades still continued, but in two parts, a place of happiness and misery. This separation of the good from the wicked in the realms of the dead is seen in the discourse concerning Hades in Josephus, as also in the history which the Saviour related of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man and the beggar were both in the same place and in sight of each other, yet the beggar was happy and comforted in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torment.

The meaning of the term Hades, as well as the Jewish ideas concerning the place of the dead about the time of the Saviour, will be best seen from the following extract from Josephus. Josephus wrote about fifty years after Christ.

“Now as to Hades, wherein the souls of the righteous and unrighteous are detained, it is necessary to speak of it. Hades is a place in the world not regularly finished; a subterraneous region, wherein the light of this world does not shine; from which circumstance, that in this region the light does not shine, it cannot be but there must be in it perpetual darkness. This region is allotted as a place of custody for souls, in which angels are appointed as guardians to them, who distribute to them temporary punishments, agreeably to every one's behaviour and manners.

“In this region there is a certain place set apart
9 *

as a lake of unquenchable fire, whereinto, we suppose, no one hath hitherto been cast, but it is prepared for a day aforedetermined by God, in which one righteous sentence shall deservedly be passed upon all men; when the unjust and those that have been disobedient to God, and have given honour to such idols as have been the vain operations of the hands of men, as to God himself, shall be adjudged to this everlasting punishment, as having been the causes of defilement; while the just shall obtain an incorruptible and never-fading kingdom. These are now indeed confined in Hades, but not in the same place wherein the just are confined.

“ For there is one descent in this region, at whose gate we believe there stands an archangel with a host; which gate when those pass through that are conducted down by the angels appointed over souls, they do not go the same way, but the *just* are guided to the *right hand*, and are led with hymns, sung by the angels appointed over that place, unto a region of light, in which the just have dwelt from the beginning of the world, not constrained by necessity, but ever enjoying the prospect of the good things they see, and rejoicing in the expectation of those new enjoyments which will be peculiar to every one of them, and esteeming those things beyond what we have here; with whom there is no place of toil; no burning heat, no piercing cold; nor any briars there; but the countenance of the fathers and of the just, which they see always, smiles upon them, while they wait for the rest and eternal new life in heaven, which is to succeed this region. This place we call the bosom of Abraham.

“But as to the unjust, they are dragged by force to the *left hand*, by the angels allotted for punishment, no longer going with a good will, but as prisoners, driven by violence ; to whom are sent the angels appointed over them to reproach them, and threaten them with their terrible looks, and to thrust them still downwards. Now these angels that are set over these souls drag them into the neighbourhood of hell itself ; who, when they are hard by it, continually hear the noise of it, and do not stand clear of the hot vapour itself ; but when they have a near view of this spectacle, as of a terrible and exceeding great prospect of fire, they are struck with a fearful expectation of a future judgment, and in effect punished thereby ; not only so, but when they see the place (or choir) of the fathers and of the just, even hereby are they punished ; for a chaos deep and large is fixed between them ; insomuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it.”

This extract is exceedingly interesting. It shows to what extent of distinctness the Jewish ideas of the future state had attained. The dream-like under world is here considerably illuminated. The righteous and the wicked are separated, and already share the first-fruits of their eternal reward. The righteous are surrounded with intimations and shadowy promises of better things to come, in the expectation of which they are already happy ; the wicked are surrounded with tokens and forebodings of more fearful ill, much of which they already suffer in awful expectation.

Through this picture, we see in faint but terrible glimmerings, in the distance, the region of eternal fire, which awaits the wicked, when the judgment day shall remove them from Hades ; on the other hand, we see also the dawning of an eternal day for the just—"the rest and eternal new life in heaven which is to succeed this region." This kingdom of the dead, beyond which the thoughts of men in the early ages did not wander, is considered only as a place of detention to the judgment, while the idea of a final state, both for the righteous and the wicked, is believed to exist beyond it.

The new dispensation which was now ushered in with clearer light, shed increased light upon "life and immortality." In its light, though the shades of this under world or middle region, do not at first entirely disappear, yet heaven and hell are clearly separated ; and in the New Testament they are always spoken of as separate and distinct places, the one down, the other up. Here different and specific names are also introduced and applied to them. Hell is now GEHENNA, Heaven is OURANOS. The word Hades still remains with its general sense—it is the grave, or invisible state in general, when the context shows it to have reference to the good, or does not determine its sense ; it is hell when the context requires it to be applied to the wicked. " Whenever the place of torment is spoken of, the word hell in the original is always Gehenna ; but whenever the state of the dead, in general, is intended, it is always expressed by a quite different name, (Hades,) which though we render

by the same word, *hell*, yet its signification is, at large, the invisible state.”*

The fathers of the church still held to the idea of an under world, in some form, until into the fourth century, dividing it into Paradise and Gehenna. It is said that even Irenæus declared the idea that the souls of the saints pass immediately, at death, to Christ into heaven, to be heresy. From the fourth century on, the idea of an under world, in its ancient form, vanished more and more from the consciousness of the church, and the idea that the saints, completely justified, pass immediately into heaven, took its place. The under world remained only as Gehenna, hell;—as a place of punishment for the wicked, into which they entered immediately after death. Some modifications, however, of this under world, as standing related to heaven, were still retained; the most prominent of which was the idea of purgatory, where, it was supposed, that some who are not altogether prepared for heaven at death, and yet too good for hell, are detained for a time, to endure a kind of atoning and sanctifying punishment.

It is not necessary now to combat this idea of an under world, in its ancient misty form, as it has of itself passed away. It was prophetic, and since immortality, with its blessed contents, has been brought to light by the gospel, this darkness has perished from the minds of men. Only where the simple ignorance of children still prevails, and where the illuminating contents of revelation have not been fully lodged in

* Dr. Samuel Clark.

the consciousness of men, can this idea still be at home. God, in great grace, has spread out clearer and brighter objects before our ardent hopes, let us enjoy the light and be thankful.

SECTION II.

THE INTERMEDIATE ABODE.

O see ! an awful world is this
Where spirits are detained. 'Tis half a heaven
And half a hell ! What horrid mixture here !
I see before me, and along the edge
Of rayless night, on either side, the shades
Of spirits move ; as yet unjudged, undoomed
Or unrewarded. Some do seem to hope ;
Some sit in gloom ; some walk in dark suspense ;
Some agonize to change their state. Oh ! say
Is all this real, or but a monstrous dream ?

What has now been said on the subject of men's first ideas of an under world, as the abode of the dead, may be considered as the unconscious, or half-conscious dreams of the world's childhood. Or it may be considered as the spiritual night-time of the human mind. In the night all is dark, or at least obscure, and if there is order it cannot be seen ; in childhood there is life, but it is an indistinct and floating kind ; so are the early impressions of men on this interesting subject. Intelligence was not alive and active, and therefore faith required neither definiteness nor consistency. Hence they were satisfied in believing in a future life, and hoping for it, without being concerned as to its particular character or nature. They were willing that it should be a dark, under-ground, dreamy

region, only so that they might there be “gathered to their people,” and enjoy their society for ever. In time, however, when intelligence was cultivated, and when the contents of divine revelation began to be subjectively apprehended by the human mind, something more definite was required.

Here we enter the second historical stage of this subject. Here, instead of the obscurity of night, we have visions in the twilight. Here, there are objects seen with some distinctness, and in a certain kind of order, too, but still in the mist of twilight, so that what seems to be order and beauty, will still be seen to be distorted and incongruous, in the clearer light which will follow.

This twilight age dawned with the new dispensation upon the world. In it, shadows gave way to substance; and immortality, which was heretofore shrouded in the darkness and obscurity of the typical age, was brought *to* light — not, however, as yet fully *into* the light. The Sun of Righteousness which arose over the world, as its light, shone also into the darkness of the Old Testament under-world. Joyfully did the hopes of men, long dwelling in cold gloom, come forth to the light. Smiles, illuminated with heavenly light, began to play upon the cold and clammy cheek of death; and the joy of Eden began gradually to take the place of the cheerless Hades.

No sun, however, rises without being preceded by the dawn and the gray twilight; and even after its rising, it does not at once pour upon the earth a perfect flood of noon-day light; it casts its rays aslant, and illuminates, at first, only the high places of the

earth, and the rest by degrees. The objects upon which it shines will also be only partially illuminated, standing still in part, and with one side in the shade. So also was it in this case. The light which dawned upon the world with the New Dispensation did not brighten all at once, and place the whole subject of man's future life at once into the full and clear light. Those whose spiritual knowledge was clearest, and who stood on the highest Tabor of faith, saw its rising glory first, and had their consciousness first illuminated by it. Others, just wakening out of sleep, saw men like trees walking. The ideas concerning the future abode of the righteous, which the Jews had in the later ages of the Jewish economy, were much more clear than those possessed by them in the earlier ages. So in the new dispensation, men had at first indistinct, and even distorted ideas, which became, afterwards, more and more consistent and clear.

It is not strange, but altogether natural, that this should be so. Divinely revealed truths, in their relation to the human mind, are first objective, and afterwards they become subjective. Objective truth is truth as it really is; subjective truth is truth as it seems to us to be, or truth as it is apprehended by our minds. The difference between truth in these two forms is clear, and very important. The contents of divine revelation were made to the world when the human mind was obtuse, dull, and darkened by sin—indeed this is the case in every age, more or less;—these truths, though clearly revealed, were only partially apprehended at first. This fact is clearly illustrated in the history of the Saviour's ministry. He

was the truth—he taught the truth to his disciples in public and in private, in the plainest words, and illustrated it by the most striking figures, symbols and parables; and yet they did not see the truth as he saw it, as he revealed it, or even as we see it now. Let any one just open the gospels, and see how clearly he tells them of the object and nature of his mission, of his coming sufferings, and of the temple of his body, which, if destroyed, he would raise up in three days. Yet his mission, to the very last, they believed to be temporal, at least in its most important character: his sufferings astonished and stunned them; and the report of his resurrection, by the women, was looked upon as an idle tale! This shows us beyond a doubt, that the contents of divine revelation are apprehended and made subjective slowly and by degrees, imperfectly and in a distorted manner at first, but gradually more and more, until at last they are in our mind, subjectively, what they are in their objective and ideal character.

The same relation which truth sustains to the individual mind, separately, it sustains also to the general mind of the church, or the world as a whole. Divine revelation finds the world divided in sentiment, under the influence of a thousand systems of corrupt and false philosophy and religion. These prejudices which shut the mind, must and can all be overcome, not at once, by a general open field attack, but by quietly lodging the regenerating contents of divine revelation, as a deeper, more central, and stronger leaven, into the general mind. This process we have in the history of the church. All that church history relates of

heresies, controversies, councils, schisms, &c., is but an exhibition of the process by which the objective contents of divine revelation are made subjective in the human mind. This process will go on still in future, until all systems founded upon a partial conception or a misapprehension of divine truth shall be overcome by the true contents of revelation. Then the facts of revelation will be apprehended by the general consciousness of the church, as they truly and really are in themselves. Then the human mind, cleansed and clear, like a clear mirror, will reflect the truth when held up before it, without obscurity or distortion.

As it is with regard to the whole system of divinely revealed truth as a whole, so it is in regard to any one fact separately taken. Thus, in the case of the doctrine of the saints' future abode, which we are contemplating, we find that it is one thing in its ideal or objective character, as it is known to God, and as it will be known to man when it has once become to the human mind what it is really in itself, but it is another thing as it has been apprehended subjectively by the human mind from age to age. Taking this view of the matter—and is it not a correct one?—we need not be surprised that the doctrine of the future abode of the righteous should have exhibited so many phases in the history of religion; and that it should be at first, and for a long time, so imperfectly apprehended.

With the New Testament, then, commences a new historical age of this question. Some of the old ideas, however, are still retained, but modified, systematized, and improved by means of the new light.

Much of the ancient drapery is also retained. Hence we have still, in the first period of the Christian church, a Hades as a third place, between heaven and hell: this idea continues with more or less authority even down to the present day, and is still held in respect, in one or other of its forms, in the Popish and Episcopal communions. Among the former it is held as purgatory, and among the latter, as a place of detention for the spirit, till the resurrection of the body—a kind of ante-chamber to heaven and hell, where the spirit undergoes some necessary preparation for final re-union with the body and entrance upon its final state and abode. With some, the idea of probation, in a certain way, is also connected with this middle abode.

It may not be amiss to state more particularly the different modifications of this idea. It is necessary, however, to keep in mind that these views are held in forms more gross or more refined, philosophical and consistent, according to the piety and learning of those who hold them.

Purgatory, as a middle place, is held by the Roman church. Purgatory, as held generally in the Roman church, is a place “under the earth, near to hell.” Or, according to some, its locality is not known, nor the exact character of the place; but it is considered to be a place where the souls of such of the faithful as are not at death entirely fit for heaven, are detained and purified—some say by fire—so as to be fit to enter the final inheritance of the saints in light. They are kept there a longer or a shorter time, according to their sins, and according to the efforts that

are made use of by their friends or the church, for their deliverance; for they are assisted in getting out “by the suffrages of the faithful, chiefly, however, by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.”

This doctrine took hold upon that church at an early age, and gradually unfolded itself in its consciousness. The hint which led to it was received from the pagan philosophy. In Homer and Virgil its glimmerings are to be found. The Platonic philosophical ideas of good and evil naturally led to it. The Platonic idea that matter is essentially bad, and spirit essentially good, that evil is the result of their union, and that by a violent austerity and severe onset upon every thing gross and material the spirit is purified, was easily entertained and nurtured in man’s self-righteous spirit, adopted into the church, carried over the grave, and constructed into a purgatory. The growing importance of works in the Roman system, and the merit attached to them, was well adapted to nurture this error. The merit of Christ’s blood gave way to the merit of human works. Thus in proportion as the blood of Christ, the true purifier, was set aside and disparaged by penance, meritorious works and monkish austerities, in that proportion did purgatory gain respect and settle itself in the faith of men. It was felt by them that after all their austerities, when continued even to their last breath, they were still, in part at least, under the influence and power of corruption; and as the blood of Christ was made of none effect by their traditions, it was necessary that a place of purification should be devised to remedy the deficiency.

The philosophy under which the church stood, as already said, was favourable to the conception of such a place. Origen deduced from the eastern Platonism a philosophy semi-pagan, and semi-Christian. It was the pagan notions evolved in Christian light. “The fallen world is subject to a law of restoration, which is fulfilled in a long series of periods. Spirits pass successively through different states, till they are all purified. The object of Origen was to deduce from this philosophy a Christian doctrine for universal salvation, or the final restoration of all fallen beings. Augustine, however, afterwards took from it a hint for a purifying abode after death, which hint was, at a still later period, developed into a doctrine by Gregory the First, in the sixth century, who is considered as the father of the church’s idea of purgatory.”

Plato held that all punishment was medicinal. The fathers, of the Alexandrine school, especially, under the influence of this philosophy, taught, in the second century, that the punishment of the wicked in a future life was finite. This idea the church, overpowered with the weight of positive scripture against it, was compelled to yield and abandon. Still, not willing to yield their hopes for the salvation of men who were moral and yet had not grace, the idea of purgatory was natural to them, and accordingly found favour. Thus, while the doctrine of eternal punishment was still held, it was only supposed to be the lot of such as were grossly and perseveringly wicked.

Thus, after this doctrine was once conceived, and made a part of Christian philosophy, it was not long until it became also a part of Christian faith. That

in favour of which we are prepossessed, and which we desire to believe, is soon believed. By the aid of apocryphal books, which had been composed under the influence of the same philosophy, and by obscure passages of scripture, this doctrine was set forth with some kind of scriptural sanction. Finally, at the Council of Florence, 1439, it was fixed fast, as a universal doctrine of the universal church, and afterwards reaffirmed by the Council of Trent. Since that it stands infallibly settled, in the opinion of the Romish faith, and “let him be accursed” who shall call it in question.

It is not necessary to give a more detailed statement of this doctrine, as the sources of information on this subject are so richly at hand to all; neither is it necessary to enter into an earnest examination of those passages in scripture upon which its claims are rested. The origin and history of this doctrine are its best refutation. No true Christian need have his prospects darkened or his hopes troubled by purgatorial fears, for he knows that Jesus has “by himself purged our sins.” He who has a clear and full conception of the doctrine of God’s word, that Jesus has made a full satisfaction for the sins of his people, and brought in for them an everlasting righteousness, which is theirs by grace only, has an argument sufficiently strong to withstand the strongest pretensions of this strange conception.

We proceed to another modification of this idea of a middle abode.

According to the Romish idea of purgatory, no change is there effected on such as have not on earth

believed and been baptized into the church—such go immediately and without hope, to hell. An idea has, however, to some extent, prevailed from an early age, that probation is extended to this middle abode; and that persons who die unjustified may, in certain cases, and under certain circumstances, even there, become interested in the blessings of salvation. “Clemens Alexandrinus was so clearly of that opinion, that he thought the soul of Christ preached salvation to the souls in hell,” after his crucifixion, during the time his body was in the grave. “At an early age,” says Dr. Knapp, “men were foolish enough to imagine that there is room to obtain an alteration in the yet undecided destiny of departed spirits.” Hence there were prayers offered for the dead. This idea continued, in the fourth and fifth century, to have advocates and opponents. It was afterwards merged into the common doctrine of purgatory—the universal history of error, from bad to worse.

In modern times this view has been held by some. It is perseveringly defended by the celebrated Heinrich Yung Stilling, whose writings have exercised a great influence on the popular mind. He supposes that souls in Hades will be in an undecided state, and are to some extent under the influence of good and bad spirits, by which they are operated upon for good or for evil. Thus, in some cases it may be possible, he thinks, for good spirits to win over the undecided into an acceptance of salvation. Still later it has been believed by some that the heathen who never hear the gospel in this life, and who consequently have no opportunity either to receive or reject it, will have it

published to them in Hades, and that, in some cases, conversion may be effected.

In regard to this theory of a probation beyond the grave, where change is possible, it is only necessary to say, that it is flatly contradicted by the whole tenor and spirit, as well as by many direct passages of scripture. Such passages as these forbid such a belief: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." (Ecc. ix. 10.) "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." (Ps. cxv. 17.) "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." (Is. xxxviii. 18, 19.) "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iv. 7.) Besides this, the whole spirit of revelation makes, on every page, the solemn impression that

Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time t' ensure the great reward.

There is still another modification of this theory of a middle abode of considerable prominence in the history of opinions.

According to this theory there is a middle abode, but it is not, like purgatory, a place of punishment, nor is it, like the last, a place of probation, where it is still possible to pass from a state of sin into a state of justification and life; but still there is something

remedial connected with this place. The soul, when it is separated from the body, is supposed still to have some imperfections which it received chiefly from its connexion with the body—something like abuse—from which it can only free itself by a process of recovery under genial, sanative influences. These, it is said, are afforded to it in this intermediate abode, under the power of which the soul is prepared for a union with a glorified body, and for the habitation of the saints in light.

This idea is held most extensively in the episcopal communion. Lest I should give a wrong idea of the faith of that respectable portion of the church of Christ, I will give it in the language of a minister* of that church who has written on that subject, and who, it may be supposed, was careful to give the true view, as held in that communion. After having argued that there is such an intermediate place, he comes to discuss the condition of those who are there, and the advantages of the place to them. He says: “It has already been stated that this intermediate state and place of abode appears not to have formed any part of the original plan of man’s existence, and the Divine economy by which he was to have been governed, if he had not fallen from his original state; but that they have been devised and introduced by Divine goodness, mercy and wisdom, to *remedy*, in the case of the righteous, certain evils and disadvantages resulting from sin and its consequences.”—“That the souls of human beings have suffered in various ways

* “The Dead in Christ.” By Rev. J. W. McCullough, A. M.

in consequence of the fall, of personal sins, of baneful influences from without, and of their connexion with these frail, vitiated, and carnal bodies, cannot be denied or reasonably doubted."

"Not only is it deprived of that healthful development, and improvement, and preparation for a higher state of existence, which it would have secured during a corresponding period of probation in its original state and condition, but it suffers great injury and disparagement, from which it does not entirely recover and repair itself in this life, even under the remedial influences provided for the truly pious.(!) The intellectual faculties are impeded and injured. The social affections are marred and corrupted. But the moral powers and affections—the *religious* nature and character—suffer most essentially and irremediably. The influence of "the world, the flesh and the devil," not only prevents such a use of the means and aids of grace as would fit the soul for a higher and more desirable state of being; but during the whole of mortal existence tends powerfully to *unfit* it for that state; and often does the soul leave this probationary state fit only for the abode and the society of lost and accursed spirits.(!) The soul, when penitent, believing and obedient, is justified or pardoned, and received into favour, through the passion and death of Christ, and if faithful to the end, comes no more into condemnation; and the idea of its being *punished* for its sins after this, is both unscriptural and absurd. But besides its original depravation, corruption and alienation from God, *essentially* corrected and repaired by regeneration, repentance, renovation, and sanctifica-

tion, its connexion with the body; its residence in such a world as this, and all the other disadvantages of our fallen state; so affect it during the whole of the present life, that nothing seems more reasonable than the idea of an intermediate state and place of abode, where it may recover from the effects of these evils, become more perfectly developed, and better prepared for reunion with a pure and glorious body, with which it is to enter upon the possession and enjoyment of its eternal inheritance. The body goes down into the grave, is dissolved into its elemental dust, and at the resurrection comes forth purified, glorious, and immortal, having escaped all the evil effects of sin; and is advanced to that eternal habitation, which, without this process, would have been its everlasting state, if man had not fallen. The soul, also, in its state of separation from the body, passes, at death, into a place prepared for it by infinite wisdom and goodness, in which it recovers its balance and health, is developed more perfectly in the image of Him that created it, and becomes perfected and fitted for reunion with its renovated and glorified body, and having thus attained the consummation of their being, the saints are advanced to their place of eternal abode."

From these extracts this idea will be understood by the reader. This idea, too, is of ancient origin, and may be traced to the pagan philosophy as its legitimate parent. It is easily seen that the above views of the connexion of soul and body are entirely Platonic. The following extract from the learned Dr. Knapp will convince the reader of the truth of this

assertion. Indeed the doctrine of the above extract, stated in a diffuse way, with many repetitions, is here stated in a few words as the doctrine of Plato! "Souls," according to Plato, "are a part of the divine nature, which, however, are confined in the body, as in a prison. Now, even after the soul of man is disembodied, there still cleaves to it much sin and impurity, acquired from its contact with the body, and this impurity is regarded by Plato as a natural *sickness*. It cannot, therefore, immediately on leaving the body, return again to its original source. With some, the disorder is *incurable*, and these are *the lost*, who go at once to *Tartarus*; with others, it is curable; and these are purged and purified in *Hades*."

This theory, like the Platonic, holds that the body and matter are essentially evil—the body is the enemy of the soul, and not its proper companion. The bad "affections and lusts" are even said to have their "seat in our carnal nature." By carnal nature the author seems to mean the body; for he says the immortal soul is "absolutely subjected and enslaved by the flesh with the affections and lusts which have their seat in our carnal nature, and through them by the world and the Prince of darkness. Even they who by the grace of God gain the victory over the flesh, are all their life long clogged, and annoyed, and impeded by connexion and sympathy with this baser constituent of our being."* The whole tenor of the argument seems to rest upon the idea that the body is the primary seat of sin, and that it is the source of

* *The Dead in Christ*, p. 102.

evil and abuse to the soul. Whereas the scriptures represent, that disobedience and transgression, which are acts of the soul, brought sin ; and sin, which is a moral disease, brought death into the world, and with it all the debility of the body. The remedy is regeneration, which affects the soul first in order, and also then the body, as a consequence, until the process becomes complete in the resurrection. It is the soul and body united, which constitute the man, and these, in their union, respectively share in the power of Christ's regenerating life ; and there can, therefore, be no such antagonism between the soul and body as is represented in this Platonic idea.

If the connexion of soul and body is so unfavourable to the development of the regenerated man, God would more successfully carry on the work of sanctification in his people by removing the soul to the intermediate abode immediately after regeneration. That place would answer better as a 'nursery' in which to cultivate celestial plants than his church on earth ! —Now, the scriptures teach just the opposite of this—that these light afflictions of the body, and the warrings of the flesh against the spirit, the fierce attacks of temptation and the strugglings of the spirit against them, are the very means by which the soul is exercised and made strong in grace. The mightiest oaks are those which have been cradled in storms. The Lord shakes the cedars of Lebanon that they may strike their roots deeper.

There is something in the above idea not only very effeminate and sentimental, but also very suspicious. It seems to us next to profane to drag out of the

superstitious dreams of the world's childhood, and out of the foolish conceits of pagan philosophy such a fanciful remedial economy, and to say of it "this state is one which has been devised by the wisdom and goodness of the Creator and Redeemer, as a means of remedying the evils of the fall."* Christians are taught, in God's word, to hope in a remedy for the ruins of the fall quite different from this; union with the life of Christ is a remedy which "abounds much more" than the evils of the fall. Christ is our eternal life—in him we have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption! What more is needed?

Where he displays His healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast,
More blessings than their father lost.

Yet all this is not sufficient. We must have a Hades! since even the regenerate soul often "leaves this probationary state, fit only for the abode and the society of lost and accursed spirits!"† But in this middle place, "under genial and sanative influences, it repairs its losses and injuries, recovers its balance and tone, becomes thoroughly developed, and fully prepared for another and still higher stage of being — whether the last, or only one of the first, we do not know."‡

As this idea of a middle place or state, in one or other of its forms, has been, and is still tolerably extensively held, it will be proper to examine still more, and in regular order, the arguments upon which it is built. Let us see whether the clear light of truth,

* The Dead in Christ, p. 54. † Ibid. p. 96. ‡ Ibid. p. 100.

which has already shone away much of its gloomy drapery, when brought to bear fairly upon it, will not shine away the rest of the superstitious web-work which has been spun between this and the future world, to obscure the vision and to entangle the aspiring hopes of God's saints.

We think it will be seen that there are in the future world only two places, a place of happiness and of misery, in accordance with the plain and constant testimony of divine revelation; and that all attempts to find a middle place have their origin in that corrupt philosophy by which the church has in all ages been afflicted. Hades, in all its forms and features, is a pleasant device to allay the fear of condemnation which arises from a sense of guilt in such as do not embrace Christ at all, or such as do not embrace him fully. It is but another attempt to effect in the future world what has so often and so vainly been attempted in this,—to afford man an opportunity of becoming, at least to some extent, his own Saviour. It is also admirably adapted to that spirit in man which leads him to idle away present opportunities, in vain and wicked presumption on others, which he vainly expects still in future to enjoy.

1. It is argued by some that the word Sheol, in Hebrew, and the word Hades, in Greek, designate such a place. It has, however, already been shown that these are general terms, like the word grave and eternity, and are used to designate the future world, without any direct reference to the condition of its inhabitants, as happy or miserable. Of the truth of this, more evidence still is at hand. The term Hades

was used among the ancient Greeks “as comprehending all the souls both of the wicked and the just—hence they did send the best of men to Hades, there to be happy, and taught rewards to be received there as well as punishments.”* This shows that it was with them a general term, not designating a third place, but comprehending in this term the worlds of the blest and the lost. There was, with them, one Hades for all that died; but this one place had two receptacles, one for the good and the other for the wicked. This same idea of Hades, as comprehending in it the two abodes, heaven and hell, is also set forth in Josephus’ “Discourse with the Greeks,” and by our Saviour, in his history of the rich man and Lazarus. Even when they do not intend to affirm or teach any thing as to the condition of those in Hades, they speak of a gulf fixed in it, on the one side of which is happiness, and, on the other, torment—but both in Hades. When they enter, the righteous are said to go to the right hand, as denoting acceptance and honour, and the wicked to the left hand, as denoting rejection and shame. Thus, then, heaven and hell are in Hades, and yet Hades is to be a third place, distinct from the two! We can say with propriety that heaven and hell are in *eternity*, because it is a general term, comprehending both; so also we can say, that a place of happiness and of torment is in *Hades*, because this also is a general term, comprehending both—but we can no more say that Hades is

* Bishop Pierson on the Creed, page 361.

a third place, distinct from the other two, than we can say that eternity is such a place.*

The very etymology of these words shows that they are taken to denote general and indefinite ideas. The word Sheol signifies “the place and state of those who are out of sight, out of the way, and to be sought for.” The word Hades is compounded of two Greek words, which, together, signify an indistinct, dark, invisible region.

If we take these words to designate a particular place as the abode of spirits after death, we must, upon like authority, hold that that place is under ground, for there it was believed by the ancients to be located; and the same evidence, which is to convince us that it is a distinct place, ought also to lead us to locate it under the earth. Into what strange contradictions do the advocates of this middle place fall. They argue, first, that there is a middle place, because the Jews believed in such a place as a dark, doleful, mysterious, under-ground kingdom; but when

* “It is a general term for the place of departed spirits: as if we should say, such an one is gone to the invisible world: he is dead: he is gone to the world of spirits. This expression leaves it undecided whether the soul is gone to heaven or hell.”—DR. ALEX. M’LEOD.

So clearly is this the sense of the terms Hades and Sheol, that almost *any number* of authorities might be quoted in proof of it. No one who is familiar with the history of this subject will for a moment pretend the contrary. Why then, we ask, in the name of all honest learning, are our religious feelings still tormented with pictures of this ghost-like region between earth and heaven! “When I became a man, I put away childish things.”

they come to describe the Hades in which **THEY** believe, then it is “a celestial nursery,”—“a garden of delights and holy joys,”—“a region upon which shines the light of God’s countenance, and where we breathe celestial airs!” How different is this modern Hades from the ancient one, and yet, from the existence of that one in the mind of the Jews, we are to be convinced that one still exists in reality!

It is said that Hades must mean a place separate and distinct, and is not a *general name* for the future world, because the ancient Greeks spake of some who were dead and in the state of the dead, whom they, nevertheless, did not believe to be in Hades. Such they believed to be the case with those who died before their time, in some unnatural way, and those whose bodies were unburied. The reason, however, why they spoke thus of those who died in a violent and untimely manner, and of those whose bodies remained unburied, was, because they believed that the souls of such are doomed to wander about on the earth—the first, until the time arrives which would have been their proper time to die; and, the second, until the body receives sepulture. Thus the soul of Polydorus was said to have wandered, and only obtained rest when his body had been honoured with funeral rites.* This same superstition has come down to our time. It is still believed among ignorant and simple-hearted peasants, that the spirit of the suicide wanders about the place where it was violently caused to leave the body before its time. By Stilling, it is taught,

* See Bishop on Creed, note, page 354.

that such as have died a violent and unnatural death, and have not received decent and orderly burial, are doomed to wander around the place where their remains are, or at least, that they often return and visit them, and are often seen. Holding this view, the Greeks could, with propriety, speak of some of the dead as not being in Hades; and the term Hades could still stand, as it universally did among them, to mean the spirit world in general, as distinct from the earth.

By taking this view of the subject, too, we avoid that endless confusion in which we find ourselves whenever we attempt to make Hades mean a third place. Upon this strange confusion of terms, a host of errors have been built. Universalists vainly try to make the terms Sheol and Hades mean the grave only, and some who oppose them as vainly try to make them mean hell only, and a third class are equally unsuccessful in interpreting them to mean a middle place; they try to make them mean neither the grave nor hell, in violation of the context, and the testimony of antiquity. Now, when we adopt the view here taken, all is plain, harmonious, and consistent. We have terms which signify heaven and hell as the final abode of spirits, and we have a general term, Hades, which signifies the spirit-world, without any reference to the condition of those who go thither as happy or miserable.

From this point of view all the passages in which these words occur, become at once intelligible to any careful reader. To take up each passage here, and give of it an exposition, would lead me too far out of

my course; but that this view of the matter is correct, will still farther appear as we examine other arguments which have been urged in favour of a middle abode, and especially when we come to the positive proof in favour of the doctrine that the souls of the saints pass immediately at death into heaven. The reader is, therefore, invited to follow patiently on.

2. It has been argued, that there are those on the earth, who, at the moment of their death, are not sufficiently wicked to be thrust into hell, nor yet sufficiently good to be taken into heaven; and that it is therefore reasonable to believe that God has made a transition place where the soul is fully ripened for its final abode.

This argument takes something for granted which the Scriptures flatly condemn. It takes for granted that there is in religion a neutral ground, whereas that idea is strongly repudiated by the direct language, as well as by the steady tenor and spirit of the holy scriptures. The Bible knows only of two classes of persons. Those who are out of Christ and not regenerated, are carnal, at enmity with God, and in a state of condemnation. Those who are in Christ are regenerate, spiritual, in favour with God, justified, and shall never come into condemnation. He who has faith small like a mustard seed, hope like a bruised reed, and love like the smoking flax, is a justified saint, a child of God, and an heir, not of Hades, but of the inheritance which is with the saints in light. He who is not united to Christ by a living faith, though he break only one of the least of the commandments, is guilty of them all; not that he will

receive equal damnation with the chief of sinners, but that the spirit in him which violates the least, is the same spirit in kind, though less in degree, which violates the whole,—is against God, and, consequently, on the side of Satan. No one can serve two masters. Christ and Belial, light and darkness, have no fellowship with each other. There are only two gates, the straight and the wide—only two ways, the narrow and the broad; and two goals are at their end; for the one leads to destruction, and the other into life. To this general tenor of divine truth on this subject, is to be added the plain declaration of Christ, “He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”

This idea also sins against the atonement. It intimates that the work of salvation is not fully and finally done in the sufferings and death of Christ, and in the application of the benefits of his death to our souls by the Spirit. The Bible tells us that the blood of Christ cleanses the soul from all sin, and fits it by its blessed sprinklings to enter into the holy place, whereas, according to this theory, part at least of this is to be accomplished by means of the middle state. In like manner, is it derogatory to the work of the Holy Spirit; He is the sanctifier, under his influence the soul is to be made ripe for a transit, at death, into glory; but according to this idea, part of this, at least, is to be done in the middle abode. “There under genial and sanative influences, it (the soul) repairs its losses and injuries, recovers its balance and tone, becomes thoroughly developed, and fully prepared for another and still higher stage of being.”*

* *Dead in Christ*, p. 100.

It sins also against the church. She is the nursery of the saints—"the mother of us all." "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25—27. Here the Saviour proposes to do by the church what the abettors of the middle abode propose to do by the genial and sanative influences of Hades. The church, which is the body of Christ, and the depository of his life, grace, word, Spirit, and ordinances, has genial and sanative influences far more effective than any to be found in this dark and dreary kingdom of shades. To one who has proper views of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the church, the following language in reference to the advantages which the soul derives from a temporary abode in Hades, sounds absolutely wicked: "Thus, after a long and severe process, and victory over many enemies, and at infinite cost, the disadvantages of the fall are at length repaired, and the original destination attained!" And again: "When the pious soul has reached this state and habitation of the dead in Christ, it is freed from whatever hinderances and disadvantages arise out of intimate connexion and sympathy with these imperfect, sluggish, sensual and diseased bodies, except so far as former connexion and sympathy may extend their baneful influence beyond the grave!"* Is this the doctrine of the Episcopal church, of which the author of the little work from which these quotations are

* *Dead in Christ*, p. 101.

made is a minister? We hope not. If it is, it is still more under the influence of the Platonic philosophy and the Romish theology than we are willing to believe. If it is, we hold our own faith in the holy catholic church far more precious than theirs.

Just extend, according to some, a certain kind of probation or preparation for heaven beyond the hour of death, and you open a flood-gate through which the church and the world will soon be completely deluged with error. Admit the existence of this intermediate abode, and one will erect in it a purgatory; another will extend the day of probation into it; another will have the gospel there preached to the heathen; another will make in it a "celestial nursery," to take the place of the church; another will have it as a place where all will be punished for awhile, and from which all men shall finally be restored to complete salvation; another will extend its wonderful remedial powers even to devils;—thus its power to redeem and restore will go far beyond the blood of Christ, the influence of the Spirit, and the tender and holy care of the church.

3. It has also been argued, that heaven, which is a place adapted to be the residence of the saints after they are replenished with bodies, cannot be a suitable place for the souls of the saints before they are united again to their bodies; and that therefore it is reasonable to think that God will not place them there till after the resurrection; and that he will, in the mean time, detain them in an intermediate abode, where they shall enjoy a place suited to their disembodied state. This argument will be answered fully, when we get to the statement and proof of what we consider

the true theory of the final abode of the righteous, and of their immediate entrance upon it at death.

In the mean time it may be remarked, that in our “Father’s house are many mansions,” all prepared by Christ, and there will, therefore, be no want of adaptation to the case of those whom the Father calls home to live with him. In the house of an earthly parent there are often full-grown children, and babes in the cradle, but the same house is adapted to each, though their circumstances and conditions vary much. The parent has food for each adapted to their peculiar wants, and knows how to employ their time pleasantly and profitably. It may be said that this world in which we live is adapted for the residence in it of full-grown men, but is it not equally adapted to children? It is adapted even to beasts, as well as to men. It is a fit abode alike for flying fowls and fishes; for the mightiest leviathan and mastodon, as well as insects and creeping things. Yet it is but one world, though it be of such various capacities. So heaven; because it is a suitable abode for the Saviour in his glorified body, and will be adapted to our renovated bodies: it is not, therefore, necessarily a place unfit for angels and the spirits of just men made perfect.

SECTION III.

TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS.

“For I was a witty child, and had a good spirit. Yea, rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled.”—WIS. OF SOL. viii. 19, 20.

The theory of the transmigration of souls, principally, though not altogether pagan, is peculiar, and

worthy of a brief notice, as exhibiting a mode by which the soul is supposed to be detained in its way to its final and blessed abode. Those who hold this doctrine, believe that there is a final place or state of complete felicity, but that this place is not reached immediately after death, but by the soul passing through many successive stages of being.

According to this doctrine, the soul, when it leaves this body at death, enters immediately into some other body suited for its reception. Sometimes it enters into another human body, sometimes the bodies of animals, and sometimes even of plants and trees. The kind of body into which it enters depends upon its disposition, and the degree of virtue and moral culture which it has previously attained. The angry and malicious are sent into serpents, the ravenous into wolves, the audacious into lions, the fraudulent into foxes—the souls of the cowards and effeminate are thrust into the bodies of women; those of murderers into the bodies of savage beasts; the lascivious into the swine, the vain and inconstant into birds, and the slothful into fishes.* Thus it is ordained by the law of fate that every spirit shall enter into a body congenial to its character, at the time it leaves its own body.

This doctrine has been common among almost all the rude and uncultivated nations and tribes of the earth in all time. It runs through all the philosophy of India and the east generally. It was held in one or other of its forms by Pythagoras, Plato, and their

* Leland, *Neces. of Divine Rev.*, vol. 2, p. 304.

disciples. It is found in the theology of the ancient Egyptians. It is said to have been held in more modern times by many of the Jews. Even since the seventeenth century it has, says Dr. Knapp, been held and advocated by Helmont, Edelman, and Lessing.

The doctrine of transmigration has also been held in various forms. In some systems it is connected with the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul ; it is supposed that as the soul has existed previous to its entrance into its present body, so it will continue to exist in another after it leaves this. Some held that the human soul is a part of God, or of the “universal soul,” every where diffused, and that it will, through successive transmigrations, finally be absorbed again into divinity. In every change it will come nearer to its original purity, till it is perfectly pure, when it will be again a part of God as it originally was before it was carried captive by a union with matter. Some held that these changes were for the purpose of purification, while others believed them to be for the purpose of retribution ; and some, that by these means the soul was elevated gradually to higher stages of enjoyment. Some held again, contrary to this, that these transmigrations are of physical, fatal, and eternal necessity, and that there was no deliverance from it. This was a doctrine of the early Egyptians, and was from them, to some extent, imbibed into the east. It belongs to the doctrine of fatalism in general, and finds favour in connexion with it. Later, the Egyptians believed that it is compelled to pass through all terrestrial and marine animals, that it completes this circuit in three thousand years, and after that enters again a human body.

Some supposed that some privileged souls would not be required to submit to this law of transmigration at all, but having been prepared by severe discipline, and by constant virtuous and divine contemplation, they were taken immediately into their final abode. Some were supposed immediately to become demons and heroes. Pythagoras, in his golden verses, promises to him who should obey his precepts, that when he leaves the body he should go into the free ether, become an immortal God, incorruptible, and be no more subject to die. The object of philosophy and religion was held to be to procure fewer and more favourable transmigrations, to abridge their duration, or to secure even a complete exemption from them.

It may here be remarked, that the doctrine of successive conflagrations and purifications which some of the oriental systems of philosophy taught, which supposed that this earth would thus by degrees become a holy habitation, and that its inhabitants would become holy with it by the same process, is plainly related to this idea of transmigration. It rests on the same philosophy in part. The theory of the earth's purification by fire as the future abode of the saints, is also the same in its ground, only baptized into the Christian system. The idea, held by some, that the souls of saints pass from planet to planet, and are thus ennobled by each ascent, rests also upon the same pagan notion. Purgatory, too, the intermediate state, and the idea of final restoration, by whatever means it is supposed to be secured, are all legitimately traced back to their parentage in the dreams of oriental philosophy. There is not, let it once for all be known,

any purification but by the blood of Christ, and by it alone ; we need no successive stages of purging, but—

“Sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”

And as there are no successive stages of purification, except progressive sanctification by the Holy Ghost, so we need no other mode of ascending to the realms of blissful light but the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof, or that convoy of angels which carried the poor beggar’s ripe spirit from the steps of the rich man’s door into Abraham’s bosom.

The ancients may have received the first hint to these views of transmigration from observing the analogies of nature. It was seen that when organized matter is dissolved, it does not perish, but only changes its form. It was seen that after the flower of the plant fades, and the seed falls to the earth, it is only to spring up in a newly constructed form. Following on the course of upward life, it was seen that the chrysalis perishes only to free its enclosed life, which bursts into a butterfly, and thus in a new form continues its old life. Thus it was natural for them, finally, to come to the idea that when the human body ceases to be pervaded by the spirit, and crumbles into its elemental dust, the spirit assumes a new form, and thus continues its existence upon earth.

This idea may, however, have a ground deeper than mere observation. It rests, perhaps, upon a deep religious feeling, and was first suggested by a deep want in the spirit. It felt that it could not return to its Creator and enjoy the holiness and perfection of his presence in its imperfect and impure state. With the

scripture mode of justification by the blood of Jesus, and of sanctification by the Holy Spirit, they were not acquainted, and hence the spirit, made earnest by a sense of its wants, constructed by its own wisdom a ladder by which to ascend to the great First Cause as its final rest. "At the bottom of this whole belief lies the deep and (in a certain sense) just feeling, that after man has wandered so far from God, in order to approach him again, he must travel with great labour through a long and dreary way; and also the conviction that nothing which is imperfect or stained with sin, can enter into the pure world of blessed spirits, or be for ever united with God."*

How little power has this doctrine to restrain evil doers! Their punishment is to consist in this, that they shall at death be thrust into bodies more suitable to the exercise of their wicked natures, where they can, in a way more free and full than before, give vent to all their corrupt and wicked passions. This is a kind of punishment in which they delight. Give them the reins of their lusts, and an element suited to their natures to revel in, and they ask no better heaven. This itself is a sufficient condemnation of this theory.

What cold consolation also does this doctrine afford to a soul which piously and ardently longs to enjoy the blessed vision of God, and to partake of the pure joys of a sinless world! Is it, then, by *this* long and dreary way that the tired soul must ascend to God and its final rest? Must the spirit which longs and

* Knapp's Theology, vol. 2, p. 603.

faints to see the abode of the blest, be doomed to submit to such long and comfortless changes? Ah, no! God has raised our souls to better hopes. The same day when the penitent thief expires on the cross, he is with Christ in paradise. Those who die in the Lord are blessed *from henceforth*, saith the Spirit, and as soon as they are absent from the body they are present with the Lord.

One gentle sigh their fetter breaks;
We scarce can say "They're gone!"
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne."

How thankful ought we to be for that blessed revelation from heaven, by which the hopes of the good are so sweetly confirmed, and by which the fears of the wicked are more and more increased! Our religion is indeed a terror to evil-doers, and a praise and joy to those who do well. May God pity the nations who sit in darkness, enable them all soon to arise and walk in the blessed light of his truth, and rejoice in the hopes of the gospel of his Son!

SECTION IV.

THE SLEEP OF THE SOUL.

"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—JESUS.

In discussing the question, whether the souls of the saints pass immediately at death into heaven, the doctrine of the sleep of the soul deserves particular notice. According to this theory, the soul, at the moment of

death, sinks into an unconscious lethargy and profound insensibility to all things. In this state it remains, like the body, in the grave, until the final resurrection, at which time it is awakened to consciousness and life again by the power of God.

This idea, no doubt, originated from the ancient idea entertained of the under world, as a dark, lonely, desolate and silent place, the land of deep forgetfulness, and unmolested quietude, where the manes of the dead repose. When the body was seen to become quiet in death, and lie in insensibility, it could easily originate the suggestion that the soul, which had constituted the activity of the body, slept or reposed in a similar way.

In later times the hint thus received was strengthened by deductions from the philosophy of the Materialists. This was a school or sect of philosophers which arose in the ancient church, and their doctrines, with various modifications, but still resting on the same general ground, have been perpetuated to this time. They believed that the soul is a result of the physical organization of the body, and is itself material. The inference was, that when this physical organization ceases its activity in death, then the soul, which was a result of it, becomes inactive also, and that, in fact, it has no existence at all separate from the body of which it is a result, just as motion results from a machine. The soul, therefore, has no real positive existence again, until it is reproduced with the reconstruction of the body in the resurrection at the last day. Infidels who held the doctrine of Materialism did not, of course, believe that the soul would

ever again be reproduced, but with the body shared ~~a~~ like hopeless fate. Such were the Sadducees, who believed not in the “resurrection, nor in angels, nor spirits.” Those of the Christian faith, who adopted this philosophy, believed that it imparted a true value and importance to the doctrine of the resurrection.

In the fifth century, according to Dr. Knapp, Hieronymus accused Vigilantius of holding this opinion, though it is believed unjustly. In the twelfth century it was held by some, as appears from the fact that it was condemned by Innocent III. In the sixteenth century it was believed and advocated by some Anabaptists and Socinians; and in the seventeenth, it was taught and defended by Christopher Artobe, John Heyer, and others. Since then, by Dr. Priestley, and by the Unitarian and Socinian Materialists generally. In reference to this doctrine, it is written upon the tomb-stone of Dr. Priestley, “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.”

This doctrine was, no doubt, first invented as a proper mode of disposing of the soul between death and the resurrection. It was felt that the soul must be somewhere during the time that the body sleeps in the grave. It was supposed that it could not be in heaven proper, until after its re-union with the body, because if that is a suitable place for the abode of the saints with their bodies, it could not, it was thought, be adapted to the soul in its denuded state. The different theories of an intermediate state and abode, were also thought to want ground in truth, hence the conclusion was attained that, as the body rests in un-

consciousness in the grave, so the soul also rests with it in *lethargus* until the resurrection. This doctrine, thus suggested by a supposed theological difficulty, was strengthened by the philosophy of the Materialists, of which it was a necessary and unavoidable deduction. After it had thus found access to the minds of men by the way of philosophy, it was an easy task to find scripture that would, at least in sound, establish it. For this purpose resort was made to figurative passages, and especially such as speak of the dead as sleeping in the grave and as knowing nothing. It was common among the ancients, as it is still, to speak of the history of the body as the history of the whole man. Hence those who firmly believe in the existence of the soul in a conscious state after death, commonly speak of their departed friends as sleeping in the grave, as knowing not, and as feeling not, and as reposing in the peaceful and dreamless slumbers in the lonely city of the dead.

The argument, in favour of the sleep of the soul, derived from the philosophical supposition that the soul is the result of corporeal organization, and that it is, therefore, not capable of existing in a state of separation from it, has evidently no good ground. The argument is false in the premises. This a few considerations will show.

Facts and reason prove that the body is not thus over and above the soul, the source and reason of its activities, and its master. Yet this would be the case according to the theory of the Materialists, just as a machine is master and ground of the energy and motion which result from it. How often do we see that

the soul, in the intensest of its activities, forgets the body entirely, and stands superior to it! It is capable of becoming so absorbed and swallowed up in its own operations as to become entirely insensible to pains and weaknesses in the body, however great they may be. This has often been seen at the stake of the martyr, as well as in

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate.”

The *will* is master of the body, and moves it at pleasure; but if the will, as part of the soul, is a *result* of the organization and the operations of the body,—if the body is its cause and ground, then we would have the strange contradiction that the effect is master of the cause!

The soul is capable of activities that are far higher, more free and more unconfined than the body. In the abstractions of its reasonings, in the flights of imagination, in the ecstasy of its joys, as well as in the deeps of its sorrows, the body is left far behind. The inspirations of which it is capable, by its contemplations of the sublime, beautiful, and lovely in poetry and in art, are entirely such as the body cannot share. The soul makes a wake which the body is too tardy and weak to follow, and it feels that which the body cannot reach with its sympathies. The poet and the artist often exceed themselves. We have an instance of inspiration which far exceeds any of those now mentioned, and which proves strongly the independence of the soul. It is the blessed ecstasy of Paul, by which he was caught up into the third heaven. So vastly absorbed was he in the powerful operations of

his spirit, that he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of it. If he was *in the body* at the time he was caught up, and heard in heaven unspeakable words, then it proves that the soul can act without being conscious of the body, and that it is consequently superior to it. If he was *out of the body*, then it proves that the soul is capable of existing in a separate state. (2 Cor. xii.)

Instances have been produced of persons who have had the operations of the mind for a length of time crippled or suspended in their activities, by an accident happening to the body. This has been the case with persons who received wounds in the head which affected the brain. This is supposed to prove that the existence of the mind is absolutely dependent upon the regular organic activity of the body, and that, therefore, when the body is entirely destroyed, of course, the soul can have neither consciousness nor activity. This, however, proves nothing in favour of the Materialists' theory. We can readily admit that the connexion of soul and body, during life, is such, that an abuse of the body may derange or suspend the operations of the mind, and yet this does not prove that the soul, when regularly and entirely freed from the body by death, is not capable of independent existence. The reason why the soul, in such cases, does not act rightly, is not because it is separate from the body, but because it is connected with the body in a diseased state. This does not prove that the soul is not capable of right action when entirely free from the body; it only proves that it will not act aright when connected with a body whose organism is sickly.

and deranged. Restore the body to its health and regular condition, and the soul will resume its functions; separate the soul entirely from it, and it may, for all this argument proves to the contrary, do the same. The body, in this case, can, at most, be considered only as a clog or impediment to the soul's operations, either to hinder entirely, or at least to distort, its regular activities; and it is just as probable that an entire separation would restore its healthful action, as that this should be accomplished by bringing again the soul and body into their regular relations. I am aware that what has now been said does not positively prove that the soul is capable of separate existence; but it does prove that the above argument of Materialism does not prove the contrary. The way is thus open for the positive Scripture proof, that the soul is capable of such separate existence.

The Scriptures teach plainly, that the soul and the body are not necessarily united, and that the soul is capable of separate existence. In the creation of man, we are told God formed him, as to his body, out of the earth; but he did not become a living soul until He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Thus while his body came from the earth, the activity of it was a consequence of that energy which God put into it by his breath; and what was that, if not the soul? We are also told, (Zech. xii. 1,) that the Lord "formeth the spirit of man within him." The Saviour also says to his disciples, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. x. 28. This he spoke to them, when

he sent them out, in reference to the persecutions to which they would be exposed. He intimates that these persecutions might be so severe as to bring death to the body, but he comforts them with the assurance that though they kill the body, the soul would still live on. There would be no force in this language, as the language of comfort, or any other supposition, than that the soul is independent of the body, and will mount upward, unscarred and unscorched from the flames of the martyr's fire. Solomon also tells us that the course which the soul and body take at death, are not only independent, but opposite to each other. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." Eccl. xii. 7.

These considerations from Scripture are not only sufficient to prove that the soul can exist independently of the body, but they go far to prove that the soul does so exist immediately after death, and while the body is sleeping in the grave. Having thus confuted fairly and completely, as we suppose, the arguments of those who hold the sleep of the soul, let us now proceed to offer a few additional arguments which prove, most directly, that the soul is conscious when separated from the body, between death and the resurrection.

The doctrine of the sleep of the soul is unreasonable and unphilosophical. It is exactly contrary to what, from a careful exercise of our reason, we would expect; especially after we have once admitted the soul's immortality. There is something too abrupt, violent, and unnatural, in the idea that the soul, at a certain

point in its history—at death,—should be suddenly arrested, extinguished, or at least rendered entirely unconscious, and remain thus for a long time, to be awakened or called into life again, to commence its course anew. The soul is evidently intended, in its nature, to be ever progressive towards its state of perfection. It is regularly progressive in this world, and it will be also in its history in the future world. Now, why should it be abruptly arrested in its progress of endless evolution and development? Has God no place into which he can call the spirit at death, where its enlargement and growth can go regularly and uninterruptedly on? What can be gained by this cold, torpid, and cheerless interlude of sleep? The soul also strongly desires this constant progress in improvement, and, consequently, great joy and happiness flow from it. The ever active spirit is not satisfied with a merely negative state, its nature excites it constantly to positive being. God will not, without great reason, arrest it in its progress in the knowledge of himself, his works, and his grace. If such a reason exists, it ought to be clearly exhibited by the advocates of the sleep of the soul. That God who seems so to delight in life, that he peoples the smallest pores of the solidest substances with animalculæ, thus passing not over the smallest part of *space* without making it swarm with miniature life, will no doubt act similarly in reference to *time*; so that every moment of time, as well as every nook of space, will be the bearer of conscious life, happy in the constant evolutions by which it is carried uninterruptedly forward in the direction of its wonderful destiny.

Again, the nature of our union with Christ as believers, is such as to forbid the idea, that the soul should ever sink into such a state of unconscious sleep. “Because I live ye shall live also,” says Christ. That is not a moral union merely, or a union, by which he becomes the defender and protector of his people, but it is a living union. He that believeth *hath*—in this world already—eternal life. It begins here, and as it is eternal life, it must live on through death and the grave. Hence, it is said, “he that liveth and believeth on Him shall never die.” Death shall not interrupt that life, it will only admit him into a higher state or stage of life. “He that hath the Son *hath* life.” This union is also taught in figures. We are in him, as the branch is in the vine,—as the members of the body are in the body,—by a living connexion. Even where the apostle speaks of the saints as united to Christ, as the stones are in a building, he calls them “lively” or living stones, and represents them as “growing” up a spiritual house. Here he does violence to the laws of figurative speech, for the purpose of teaching this life-union between Christ and his saints. He is the head, we are the members; and the same life which is in him is also in us.

Now this union commences in regeneration, and can never end, no more than the life of Christ can end, or be suspended. It continues to the end of life,—is mightier than the grave, through Him who is the resurrection and the life,—and stretches itself over death into the future world in which it lives on eternally the same eternal life. The reason why the saint

lives in divine life in this world is because Christ lives, and the saint lives in him; and the reason why he shall live uninterruptedly on, is the same reason continued. Blessed truth! We are planted into the source of eternal life, how can our life be interrupted as long as the source flows!

This furnishes us with the reason why this doctrine of the sleep of the soul stands so firmly, and is received so freely among Unitarians and Socinians. It can flourish in no other soil. By them, this life-union with Christ is denied. They make religion consist merely in imitating Christ's example, believing and following his doctrines, acting under the better motives which he revealed, and thus becoming morally united to him. In their scheme this doctrine is consistent. They receive the Saviour as the way and the truth,—as example and teacher; but not as the LIFE. Materialism in philosophy, and Socinian and Unitarian rationalism in theology, are necessarily united where they are intelligently and consistently held. Here, alone, the sleep of the soul can find favour. In divinely illuminated philosophy, and in evangelical theology, it finds no comfortable resting-place. To enlightened evangelical minds, it is both philosophically and theologically inconsistent; and to less intelligent, but humble and pious minds, it is coldly repugnant; even though the ground, on which the cheerless error rests, be not understood, yet pious feeling and holy hope instinctively start back from this chilling clime, to breathe and live in air more genial to the renewed spirit's deep wants.

As sound reason and Christian philosophy forbid us

to believe the sleep of the soul, so also does scripture.

Paul says, "That to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8.) The Saviour lives, and to be present with him, after death separates us from the body, is certainly to enjoy conscious being. For this reason also, he had a desire to depart from the body, that he might be with Christ, which he knew would be far better. (Phil. i. 23.) The Old Testament saints were not sleeping at the time when the Saviour was upon earth, for he proves to the Sadducees that they were alive at the time, from the fact, that God proclaims himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and how could he be their God if they were not alive? "for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living." (Luke xx. 38.) The same is evident also from the fact, that when the Saviour was transfigured on the mount, Moses and Elias appeared with him, and were seen by the disciples. The penitent thief on the cross had the promise given him of the Saviour that he should have his life and consciousness continued through death, and should even, that day, be with the Saviour in paradise. (Luke xxii. 43.) The history of the rich man and Lazarus affords an unanswerable proof that the soul is conscious after death. (Luke xvi. 19—31.) Its testimony can only be hushed by the wildest and most unnatural suppositions, and by the most cruel tortures, such as never would have been resorted to, if they had not been necessary to support a theory. In the Revelation of John, who, on the Isle Patmos, had presented to his vision "a door opened into hea-

ven," the blessed are represented continually as living, acting, singing, and praising God. (Rev. v. 29; vi. 9, 10; vii. 9.) This was all before the resurrection, for the resurrection is first mentioned in the twentieth chapter.

This doctrine of the sleep of the soul is also condemned by the foretaste of future joys, which the saints are often permitted to enjoy at their death. God is pleased to grant to his saints in their last hours the first-fruits of heavenly felicity as an earnest and pledge of more blessed things to come, so that they often feel, while yet in the flesh, the strong beatings of the pulse of immortal life.

"Quite on the verge of heaven."

Of this we have instances in scripture, and in the experience of God's people in the church. Stephen, who fell a martyr to the truth which he preached to the betrayers and murderers of the Lord Jesus, had these sweet foretastes. While they, being cut to the heart by the truth he uttered, gnashed their teeth in anger, "he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." This enraged them still more, and they ran upon him and stoned him, until the spirit was forced from the body; but he, in joyous prospect of soon entering that heaven which had been so graciously opened to him, and of flying to the arms of that Saviour whom he saw standing at God's right hand, breathed out his life sweetly, as in sleep, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my

spirit." Who can believe that these bright visions of the dying martyr were the dark shades of a long and dreamless sleep, which was just then settling upon his spirit? Who can hear him commanding his spirit to that Saviour who was then so clearly before him, in his dying visions, and then believe that Stephen has been for eighteen hundred years, and is still, reposing in profound unconsciousness?

It seems that the lovely and joyful borders of heaven sweetly intrude themselves into this world. There is, on this side of Jordan, in the wilderness, not only a tall Pisgah which affords to the eye of elevated faith a transient glimpse of the Canaan of promise, but there is also, right on the border of the stream, a delightful low-land, to which the soft breezes of Canaan come; where the perfume of her vineyards is wafted pleasantly, and where angels themselves present the pilgrims with some ripe clusters, as a foretaste of the coming vintage. This land lies quite on the verge of heaven, to refresh the dying saints. It is called by Bunyan "the country of Beulah," and beautifully described in his Pilgrim's Progress. "Now I saw in my dream, that by this time the pilgrims were got over the enchanted ground, and entering into the country of Beulah, (Is. lxii. 4—12; Cant. ii. 10—12;) whose air was very sweet and pleasant, the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day: wherefore this was beyond the valley of the Shadow

of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair ; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were within sight of the city they were going to : also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof ; for in this land, the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven."

What a description is this ! Every image in it needs to be carefully considered to fix the idea full in the mind. This land is not fanciful ; in instances innumerable, Christians, before dying, have felt that they were in it. It is worthy of notice that it is placed *beyond* the valley of the shadow of death. We are prone to think that after the last breath is breathed then the spirit passes through this valley ; but it is not so. All the pains and fears, all the gloom and bitterness of death is often past, for some time, before the spirit leaves the body. How often has this been found to be the experience of dying Christians ! They, shortly before they die, emerge as out of darkness and fears, into light and calmness, as though their very faces were radiant with heavenly light, and as though the spirit were basking already in seas of joy and love. When this is the case, they have reached the land of Beulah, on the borders of heaven, and the shadow of death is passed !

It is related of an intelligent and pious lady, that when she drew near to death, she got into great doubt, darkness, and fears. Her husband believed that it was the shadow of death into which she was entering, and he requested that if her spirit became brighter even after she could speak no more, she should give

him a token of it by pressing his hand. After having lain for some time speechless, and her countenance covered with quiet gloom, her eyes suddenly became bright, and her face kindled into unearthly smiles; she turned towards her husband, and pressed into his hand her joyful farewell! Blessed triumph! happy conqueror! Was she just then falling asleep?

This lady was but a short time in Beulah, but still it threw its light in heavenly smiles upon her countenance. Others of Zion's wayfaring men have a longer tarrying time in this valley of delights. Dr. Payson was in it for some weeks before his death. "When I read Bunyan's description of the land Beulah, where the sun shines and the birds sing day and night, I used to doubt whether there was such a place; but now my own experience has convinced me of it, and it infinitely transcends all my previous conceptions. I think the happiness I enjoy is similar to that enjoyed by glorified spirits before the resurrection." In a letter which he dictated to his sister some time before his death, he says, "Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger

and brighter as he approaches, and now he fills the whole hemisphere ; pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun ; exulting, yet almost trembling while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants : I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion. O, my sister ! my sister ! could you but know what awaits the Christian ; could you know only so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing, and even leaping for joy. Labours, trials, troubles, would be nothing : you would rejoice in afflictions, and glory in tribulations ; and, like Paul and Silas, sing God's praises in the darkest night, and in the deepest dungeon."

When this ripe saint was still nearer his end, he said, "My soul, instead of growing weaker and more languishing, as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break from the body and join those around the throne." Still later, he said, "It seems as if my soul had found a pair of new wings, and was eager to try them, that in her flutterings she would rend the fine net-work of the body to pieces!"

I add no comment ; but would ask the reader, whether all this was but the beginning of the spirit's going to sleep ; and whether Stephen and Payson, whose spirits were thus floating and basking in the bright and joyful dawn of immortal life, at the hour of death, were at the time sinking into profound unconscious-

ness, in which they are still sleeping on! Who can believe it?

The last argument I shall offer against the sleep of the soul is, that it is too cheerless and gloomy to find place in a gospel so much abounding in consolations as does the gospel of Jesus Christ. It may be said that it cannot be cheerless, because the soul will lie in deep repose, and be insensible to pain; but what makes it cheerless is that it is insensible also to joy. After God has, by the revelation of a blessed heaven, excited the hopes of his saints, and has granted to them the beginning of its joys in this life, it is cheerless to think that the full fruition of its bliss must be so long deferred, and that the very beginnings of it, by which they were often filled with joy unspeakable, must be interrupted by unconscious years, and perhaps ages. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." If the idea of complete annihilation is cheerless, this is also, for it is, for a time, the same in effect. No Christian could meet death as cheerfully, and be as happy in its near approach, if he held this view, as if he believed that he should, immediately after the soul leaves the body, live in conscious and positive enjoyment.

If, however, it were not cheerless to the person dying, it would be to his weeping friends, whom he leaves behind. The scriptures abound in comforts to the bereaved, and the sweetest source of comfort is that they "are blessed" who die in the Lord "from henceforth;" and that henceforth there is laid up for them a crown of life. The scriptures make the impression on our minds that our departed ones are with Christ in heaven, and not in the deep silence of the

grave. Hence they are represented as coming with him from heaven, at his second coming. (1 Thess. iii. 13.) It is our sweetest consolation, that they are completely blessed. We only become fully reconciled to consign them to the grave, because we believe that they are happier now, than we could possibly make them. It is true, that submission to God's will, who is wise and good, is the chief stay to us in the day of trial and sorrow; but it must be remembered that God does not require us to submit to his will in an arbitrary way, but he is merciful to our infirmities, and to this end he stoops to us with such consolations as will not only lead us to submit, but to submit cheerfully, knowing that our loss was their gain.

We desire that those whom we love, while they are with us on earth, should not only be free from misery, but that they should be positively happy, and to make them so is our highest diligence and concern. To believe, therefore, that when dead, they sleep in unconsciousness, in a state entirely negative, is something we cannot endure. If we desire that while they are with us, they should share with us in positive joy, how can we be satisfied with the idea that such positive joys are not continued to them? If I must return from the grave where I laid my dearest friend, whose happiness it was the object of my life to promote, with no other comfort than that he is unconscious of pain, and that his spirit is as dead as his body until the resurrection,—if I must believe this, then I will weep on. Like Rachel, weeping for her children, I cannot be comforted, because he is not. I bend over the stone which marks his resting-place, and am told that

the spirit which was part of my own is dead, for the time being, like the body which is decaying beneath. They tell me, that the heart which loved once is now incapable of loving ; that those affections which were set so strongly, and with imperishable freshness on my heart, and which even had their only life in the love of God and holy beings, now love nothing ! I thought love had something of divinity in it, and was, therefore, itself undying ; but they say not. I thought love was “strong as death,” and that it could neither be quenched by the waters, nor drowned by the floods, (Songs viii. 6, 7;) but they say that in the damp, dark charnel its light is extinguished. But I will not hear them. Miserable comforters are they all !

“ How can this bleeding heart beat on,
While thine responds no more ?
How can this bitter agony be borne —
This desolation at Life’s core ! ”

When I read that the rich man, even in hell, took an interest in his five brethren who were still on the earth, I have hopes that those in heaven are not less under the power of benevolent feelings and sympathies, and that, therefore, they do even still love those whom they loved on earth, and take an interest in them ; but they tell me it is not so. I love them still, and have thought that the power which draws me sorrowing after them, was the power of their affection toward me ; but they say my love is not returned. This is cheerless ; for what can make us more unhappy than the thought that those we love do not, and cannot return our love. They tell me that as the grassy grave over which I weep drinks up my tears, and re-

turns them not again, so the departed return no affection that is lavished upon their memories ; they heed not our tears, they hear not our sighs, and they feel not the warmth of our continued love for them. Oh ! ye cold philosophers, do not insult our feelings thus in the day of our sorrow !

Twenty long years ago, I buried my dearest friend, after for a long time we had smiled and wept along life's way together. Then I comforted myself with the hope that he had gone to be with Christ, which is far better. Now I hear that he has all the while been sleeping in death's dreary embrace. I go to his grave to refresh his memory in my heart ; and, after having, through twenty long years, thought much, felt much, endured much, hoped much, enjoyed much, and wept much, I am told that all this while my friend has thought, felt, hoped, and enjoyed nothing ! I am soon to die, and be buried by his side, and there, ages on ages, perhaps, until the final resurrection, our spirits, which once loved so ardently, shall lie together in dreary lonely silence ! Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, John the lovely, and all whom we loved that are dead in Christ—all—are lying, soul and body alike unconscious, in the dreamless slumbers of the grave ! Away with this cheerless dream ! I cannot hear it. It does violence to my spirit, which God has created for conscious enjoyment ; which Christ has redeemed by giving it eternal LIFE ; which the Holy Ghost has cultivated to hope more warmly than it could otherwise have done for the very thing which this unbaptized philosophy denies it ; and which the Bible declares shall, at the

time the body sinks into dust, “return unto God who gave it.” (Eccl. xii. 7.) Out into the cold world, ye cheerless Materialists; as cold as matter itself is your philosophy. It cannot live near the warm beating heart of that Saviour who is the life of all his people, and who, by living in them, makes it as impossible that their life should be suspended as it is that he himself should die.

SECTION V.

THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD LINGERING ABOUT THEIR GRAVES.

There is a dreamy presence every where,
 As if of spirits passing to and fro ;
 We almost hear their voices in the air,
 And feel their balmy pinions touch the brow.

We feel as if a breath might put aside
 The shadowy curtain of the spirit-land ;
 Revealing all the loved and glorified,
 That death hath taken from affection’s band.

LYDIA JANE PIERSON.

Some who do not believe that the souls of the saints pass immediately, at death, into heaven, have held the opinion that their spirits linger about the grave where the body lies, until the day of resurrection.

Socrates, while he believed that those who are cultivated by the study of wisdom and philosophy to lives of abstraction from the body, ascend at death to that which is divine and immortal, believed, also, “that they who only minded the body, and its appetites and pleasures, having something in them ponderous and

earthy, shall, after their departure out of this life, be drawn down to the earth, and hover about the sepulchres." Dr. Knapp says of the ancients, "Many believed that departed souls remain in and about the graves or dwellings of the dead, either for ever, or for a long time: so do many nations of different degrees of cultivation. The opinion was formerly very widely diffused, that departed spirits linger for a long time around the dead body, or, at least, sometimes return to it from the kingdom of the dead; and hence, in part, the belief in spectres. These ideas prevailed to some extent among the Jews and early Christians; and even in the Concil. Iliberit., in the year 313, it is forbidden to kindle a light in burying ground, lest the spirits of the saints should be disturbed."

That the dead, whose bodies were not decently buried, could not enter the world of spirits, but had to wander about on earth, was the general belief in Homer's time, as may be seen in his Iliad. After the death of Patroclus, whose body,

"Soiled with dust, and black with gore,
Lies on broad Hellespont's resounding shore,"

Achilles is represented as retiring to the sea-shore, where, falling asleep, the ghost of his friend appears to him, chides him most mournfully, and asks complainingly for a burial of his body that he may be permitted to enter into the land of spirits.

"And sleeps Achilles?" thus the phantom said;
"Sleeps my Achilles, his Patroclus dead!
Living, I seemed his dearest, tenderest care,
But now, forgot, I wander in the air."

Let my pale corse the rites of burial know,
 And give me entrance in the realms below :
 Till then the spirit finds no resting-place,
 But here and there, th' unbodied spectres chase
 The vagrant dead around the dark abode,
 Forbid to cross th' irremeable flood."

Iliad, Bk. 23, line 83.

The idea that the spirits, of at least some, linger about the place where their bodies are, is also advanced by Stilling, that master in the regions of superstitious twilight. He held the idea, which is also held by Drew, and many others, that there is, and remains in the body even after death, and while it decays in the grave, an imperishable substance, called the germ of the resurrection (Auferstehungskeim;) and that this will form the basis of the resurrection body. This being in the grave with the body, the spirit is drawn towards it as its home, by a mysterious attraction ; and though the spirit is not always there, yet it feels a particular interest in that place, and is, in a manner, bound to it by anxious expectation and hope. Hence it was concluded, that the place where the dead are buried is the particular home of the spirit, and the centre of its attractions, as though it could not leave the world without its companion the body.

Even now there is a general feeling, if not a general faith of this kind. Among simple-hearted peasants, ghosts are seen where one was murdered, where one murdered himself, or where one lost his life in some violent or extraordinary way. To them, grave-yards are hallowed places, made awful by the supposed presence of the dead. There are many even among the

more intelligent who *feel* as though the spirits of the departed were near the cold sepulchral remains, though they do not really believe it. Hence it is common for persons, of all grades of cultivation, to seek beneath the willow where they lie, a kind of lonely fellowship with their beloved dead. There is a sweet hope, at least, that there they are nearer to them than in all the world beside; and he is regarded as a cold and heartless intruder who would argue away from them the cherished dream. "She goeth to the grave to weep there." Sweet mourner! Though we would not rudely drive her away from the spot which has embosomed all she held dear on earth, or forbid her with tears to water the earth, which she expects will some day yield her back her own again; yet we would whisper softly, "He is not here. Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

Many of the arguments that were urged against the sleep of the soul in the previous section, bear with equal force against this idea. It is not necessary to array them anew specially against this theory. If it can be done without making the spot where our friends sleep less hallowed and endeared, it might be well for us to dislodge from our minds a little the idea that the spirits of our departed friends are to be sought and communed with at their graves. Respect for their memories, and for their bodies, ought to be sufficient to embalm in our hearts the spot where they lie in perpetual remembrance, and lead us often to it, to pay there the devotions of love.

We find it, therefore, much to our comfort, while it is no insult to the memory of the dead, to banish from

our minds the idea that they are peculiarly there. Mourner! why do you desire to think your departed friend there? Do you really wish and hope that the spirit you love were there? The idea, in proportion as you realize it, will increase your sorrow. The place is so cold and lonely. The night winds sigh so dolefully there. How dreadful in the dead of night is that dreary and dreamless silence! The snow lies so cold upon the grave, and fiercer, than even the cutting anguish of your bereaved heart, are the wintry storms that rave, and drift, and whirl around the monumental marble. Do you then wish them there, the sainted dead? No, no. They are not there, it is only inanimate mortality. It feels not its loneliness, and is not chilled by the coldness of the place.

You think of their spirits as vigiling the body lying in moveless silence, as listening to the night winds, or as making a tender and mournful lament over their lonely condition, and thus thinking, you are sad; but banish the thought from your mind, for they are not there. In happier society than that in the city of the dead, they live; to sweeter sounds they listen; to the music of angelic choirs they bend an enraptured ear. In genial and stormless climes they have found a home.

Far from this world of toil and strife,
They're present with the Lord.

SECTION VI.

THE TRUE DOCTRINE.

One gentle sigh their fetter breaks;
We scarce can say "They're gone!"
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne.

The different theories by which the souls of saints are supposed to be detained from entering heaven immediately at death, have now been exhibited. They have led us a long and dreary chase. The groundlessness of these theories has been, in part, shown in connexion with a statement of them. They will, however, be more completely overthrown by a statement of the true doctrine, and by the arguments that may be adduced in its support. Various arguments that, in passing along, were offered against these false views, will also substantiate the true doctrine; thus the same implements that have been used to tear down the old building, may be employed to erect the new. If, therefore, anything should be presented in this section, among other things, which may seem to have been presented before, it must be remembered that though they are the same tools, they are now used to do a different kind of execution.

We consider the true doctrine of God's word on this subject to be this: The saints do immediately, at death, enter that place which is called heaven, where the body of the Saviour now is, where the divine manifestations are most clearly and gloriously made, where angels have their proper home, and where all

the heirs of Christ shall finally and for evermore be assembled.

That the saints pass immediately at death into heaven, is taught in the symbols in some of the most pious and learned denominations in the church. We grant that this does not prove it absolutely true; but it has much weight, as showing how the scripture on this subject was understood by many pious and learned men who had the same interest in, and motives to the truth as we have, and were, we may therefore suppose, just as sincerely anxious to be led into the truth as we can possibly be. The conclusions, therefore, to which they have come, and which have been adopted by their numerous successors for centuries, are valuable. Besides furnishing us with the testimony of so much learning and piety, it serves to show that this is no new idea, and that it is not the faith of a few, but is the testimony of the church.

The first symbolical testimony we produce is the Heidelberg Catechism, published first in 1563. This symbol has been the embodiment of the Reformed faith for more than three centuries. Its influence has been very extensively respected and felt. It has, since its publication, been translated and read in, at least, fourteen different languages; and it is said that *half a million of editions* of it have been published in Germany alone. In this country it is received as a symbolic book, both in the Dutch Reformed and in the German Reformed churches. In the fifty-seventh question it is asked, What comfort is afforded to us by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; and the answer is: "That not only my soul after this life

shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head ; but also, that my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be re-united with my soul, and be made like unto the glorious body of Christ." Here the doctrine is plainly taught, and has been responded to with a joyful amen by millions during three hundred years.

The next is from the Shorter Catechism, received as a symbolic book, in the different branches of the Presbyterian communion. It is in answer to the thirty-seventh question : "What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death ?—The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, *and do immediately pass into glory* ; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." In the eighty-sixth question of the Larger Catechism, this same doctrine is taught in more words. The following quotation is from the Westminster Confession of Faith : "The bodies of men, after death, return to dust and see corruption ; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep) having an immortal substance, *immediately return to God who gave them*. The souls of the righteous, being *then* made perfect in holiness, *are received into the highest heavens*, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies." The declaration that they are "*then* made perfect in holiness," is no doubt directly aimed against the idea of a process of purgatorial or medicinal preparation, mentioned in a previous section. The declaration that they are then "*received into the highest heavens*," is intended to stand in opposition to the idea of a middle abode in all its forms.

The book of "Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church" is silent on this subject; but so far as I have been able to learn, the proper Protestant doctrine on this subject is held in that large communion. Their views of the nature of justification and sanctification, would admit of no other to be consistently believed among them. It is believed that this is also the prevailing sentiment among Baptists and other Congregationalists.

What is here presented from symbols as the united faith of so many learned and pious men living in different ages, and in different parts of the world, is also founded on holy scripture. By no wresting and violence has the church in the general stream of its theological views been turned aside from this faith. It is in vain that men hope to annul, by means of violent and unnatural interpretations, the plain declarations of scripture, to serve a theory.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers."

The Saviour said to the penitent thief on the cross: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Now the question arises, Where and what is that paradise in which the Saviour promised the dying penitent that he should be with him that day? This can be seen by referring to other passages in the scriptures, where the word paradise is used, and where its sense cannot be mistaken. This can be seen by reference to 2 Cor. xii. There it is said that Paul was caught up into paradise; and in the same passage the place into which he was taken is called the *third heaven*—the

highest and holiest place in the universe. In Revelation ii. 7, we are told that the tree of life stands in the midst of the paradise of God; and in Rev. xxii. 2, we are told that that same tree of life stands by the side of the river which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. From this it is evident that paradise is the heaven where God dwells and the Lamb: Is then the middle abode, Hades, the kingdom of shades, the peculiar abode of God and the Lamb?

The objection that the Saviour himself did not go to heaven that day, but was for forty days afterwards on the earth, and that therefore he could not be with the penitent thief in paradise, has no force. During the three days that intervened between his death and resurrection, he could as well be in heaven as in Hades. Indeed it is evident that he was in heaven during those three days, from what he says to his disciples shortly before his death: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, *because I go to the Father.*" Moreover, his tarrying on the earth and appearing among his disciples, does not conflict with the idea that he was also in paradise. When he was yet in the flesh on earth, he could say: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which *is in heaven.*" In the same way that he was in heaven at that time, he may have been in heaven with the penitent thief during the forty days between his death and ascension.

The history of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.), plainly teaches that both the righteous and the wicked, at death, pass into a *fixed* and eternal abode,

where no change is possible. No comment on this passage is necessary. This portion of scripture has a thousand times been tortured out of its meaning by errorists of various kinds, and as often has its testimony fallen back into the church's healthful stream of sound views. As a sheep, carried away from the fold, returns when set free, so this passage always comes back again; for the voice of a stranger it heareth not, nor followeth!

In the Revelation, John, in his visions, saw the souls of departed martyrs and saints "in heaven," "under the altar," "before the throne of God," &c., and in the company of each other, of God, of Christ, and of angels, in the central and highest heavens, and in that place where the saints go no more out for ever. Let it be remembered, also, that all this is *before the resurrection*, and if the following passages are carefully considered, they will leave no doubt on any candid mind that the saints are, immediately after death, admitted into heaven. To quote them all would be too tedious, a reference to them is sufficient. Rev. v. 6-14: vi. 9-12: vii. 9-17: xiv. 1-6: xiv. 12, 13.

For farther proof still, the reader is referred to Acts vii. 59: 2 Cor. v. 1-9: Phil. i. 21-24: 2 Tim. iv. 6-9: Eph. iii. 15. In this last passage, the whole family of Christ is represented to be at two places, in heaven and on earth; but according to the other theory, there ought also to be some in Hades, or the third place.

It may also be remarked, that the misery of the wicked commences, according to the scripture, imme-

dately after death, and before the resurrection, and that their condition is unchangeably fixed. This is evident from Luke xvi. ; and also from that passage in Jude where he says that those who had died impenitent in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, were, at the time he wrote, “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” In like manner it is said of the righteous at death, that they are blessed “from henceforth ;” and of those who were clothed in white robes, having come up through great tribulation, it is said, “therefore *are* they before the throne of God.”

These passages are plain, and it would, in all probability, never have been attempted to make them mean any thing different from their plain sense, were it not for some difficulties, which, it is thought, stood in the way of the doctrine that the souls of the saints pass immediately at death into heaven. Let us look at these, and see whether they are not fancied difficulties, which one glance at the truth ought to remove.

1. It is said that the soul, in a state of separation from the body, cannot be in the same state, nor properly in the same place, as it will be after the resurrection ; and as heaven is to be the eternal abode of the saints after the resurrection, it cannot be a proper abode for them before. This objection has, however, no force. There is, for instance, in this world, a great difference between a person in childhood and old age, yea, before he is born and after, or between his sleeping and waking state, and yet he is in all these in the same world, in the same place, and is the same person. The state and condition of the Saviour differs widely from that of any saint or angel, and yet

both are in heaven. So angels and human spirits differ, and yet both are in one company and in one place. So in heaven, the condition of the saints before and after the resurrection may differ much, and yet they may be, in both cases, in the same place.

2. The saints cannot enter heaven, it is said, before they are judged, and as the day of judgment is represented to be after the resurrection, the saints cannot enter heaven until after that, and consequently not immediately at death. We may, however, consider, as is generally done, that the day of judgment is only a public and final consummation of the decision of man's destiny. Although God can, and no doubt, does, for himself, judge and decide for each one when he dies, yet it seems necessary for the glorious praise of his justice and righteousness, that all other intelligences should see the propriety of his decision. This is necessary, that every mouth may be stopped; and in order to do this he has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained.

3. It is also said that the condition of many is represented in that day to be undecided. Thus many are said to be disappointed; coming to be judged, they find that their expectations of heaven are vain, and they say, "Have we not prophesied, cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in thy name?" Now, it is said that if these persons had been in a fixed state before, they could not have been in doubt on this matter. The force of this objection is only apparent. The representations of the judgment are after the manner of men, and consequently our conceptions of

it must be more or less according to what we are accustomed to see on earth. The Saviour is warning his hearers not to delay preparation for death; and, in order to impress his solemn exhortation, tells them that many will find themselves disappointed in their expectations in reference to the final decision of their Judge, and that their hopes of heaven, being built on the sand, will fail at last. It does no more exclusively refer to that day than the many warnings to prepare to meet the Son of man refer to the time of his second coming. He is always coming, and to prepare for death, is to prepare to meet him. So to find ourselves deceived at the day of death, is the same as to find ourselves deceived at the day of judgment.

4. Again, it is said, that in some cases the full effects and consequences of persons' actions are not fully worked out when persons die. Thus, for instance, it is known that the labours and writings of many infidels, who are long since dead, are still working for evil; and on the other hand, the labours and writings of many good men are still working out good. These consequences must, in a certain sense, come into the consideration of their punishment or reward. Hence it is thought their destiny cannot immediately be decided. But to this it may be replied, that God, who judges, knows how these consequences will work themselves out, and is able, therefore, to give a just judgment as well at the day of death as at the end of the world. At the last day, when all consequences have run out their history, it will be proper that they should be exhibited in a solemn public judgment, that all may see for themselves that all his ways are just

and right. Besides, there is nothing unreasonable or unscriptural in the belief that the happiness of the righteous in heaven, and the misery of the lost in hell, will increase in exact proportion as the consequences of their actions on the earth are developing themselves, until the day of judgment, when the cup will be full, and then the full draught of happiness or misery will be taken finally and for ever! Oh! what a moment will that be!

Some additional considerations will serve more completely still to answer these and other objections, and reconcile the serious and thoughtful mind to the idea that the souls of the saints are in heaven before the resurrection of the body.

We shall only gain proper ideas in reference to this interesting subject, when we have corrected our ideas of heaven, for many of them are evidently wrong. We are inclined to think of heaven as affording to the saints a fixed or stereotyped condition, without attaching to it the idea of degrees and progression. When we maintain that the saints pass immediately at death into heaven, we do not mean that they enter then upon their final condition, or into their highest state of perfection; but only that they enter into that *place* which is their final abode. When, for instance, a child is born into the world, it is in the world; but it is limited in its observations, actions, ideas, capacities and enjoyments, and yet all these are in their state perfect; all its faculties occupy their place symmetrically, and we have in the child a uniform, but not a perfect being. Analogous to this, may be the primary stage of our future celestial history. The child is in

the world before it is born, and during its infantile years, but how different is it, and how different is the world to it, from what it will be when all its faculties are ripe! So in heaven. The child before self-consciousness, appears to enjoy an indistinct and floating life, but happy too; so may it be with our future condition before the resurrection of the body. The condition of the disembodied spirit will, no doubt, be somewhat isolated and lonely, (in a pleasant sense;) its happiness being derived much, though not entirely, from the flow of its own harmonious existence, and not from its connexion with things external. Its future connexion with its body will arrest its floating condition, and connect it again more consciously with locality and materiality. Thus it will become more capable of social relations and joys; just as the child emerging from its floating state in infancy, has its social powers developed by being furnished with self-consciousness and speech, by which it learns intelligently to separate and distinguish itself from the general mass of being, which makes its enjoyments higher in their nature, and more acute and sensible in their quality.

Perhaps the state of the saints previous to the resurrection of the body, and in the first stage of their future being, may be analogous to (but of course higher than) a state of ordinary sleep, with active, pleasant dreaming. In dreams, the spirit acts and enjoys, unconscious of the body; and may we not suppose that the spirit after death may, to a certain extent, act and enjoy without the body? Perhaps it may in this state pass profitably and pleasantly through the

first stages of its future history. It may, so to say, become habituated to eternal things, and develop its spiritual capacities to such a degree as to be prepared, at the time of the resurrection, to enter upon a more tangible and positive state of existence. It may thus, also, become acquainted with purely spiritual beings, and with the modes of purely spiritual existence. This will be useful, because the saints after the resurrection will be required to hold communion with things material and immaterial. While the saint is in this world, in the body, he becomes conversant with material things, and habituated to them ; now, in the other world, in a disembodied state, previous to the resurrection, he will become conversant with and habituated to purely spiritual existence, so that after the resurrection, when soul and body are again united, he will be able to hold converse and communion with either material or immaterial existences, at pleasure.

To this it may be objected, that while those who lived in the early ages of the world, would have a long time to remain in this state of celestial pupilage, those who live in later ages would have less, and those in the last days scarcely any.

This objection, so far from militating against this idea, most beautifully illustrates and confirms it. Thus, the souls of men are more developed in spiritual things now, and will be still more in future than they were in the earlier ages of the world. Those who lived in the morning of the world, had very limited and indistinct ideas of divine and eternal things. Their views of a future world, especially, were exceedingly misty and obscure. As the church advanced,

life and immortality were more and more brought to light. Revelation passed from types, shadows, and ceremonies, into brighter and clearer realities; and spiritual conceptions gained a firmer and more distinct hold upon the consciousness of men. The new dispensation was an advance upon the old, as under the old the age of prophecy had been upon the law, and the law upon the simple twilight of the patriarchal age. In what a different light those who lived after the new dispensation dawned, stood from those under the Old Testament, is clear from what the Saviour says: "Among those that are born of woman, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God," (in the new dispensation,) "is greater than he."

At the present day, clearer views are enjoyed than were enjoyed in the early history of the Christian church. Let any one read the history of the patristic controversies, and he will see how the most learned stumbled among propositions in search of truth which are now clearly comprehended by intelligent Sabbath-school children. And so it will be on into the future. Spiritual ideas, which are as giants to us, and the nature and relations of which we do not see, will be apprehended by our successors at once. Thus, under the tuition of the Spirit, revelation will show itself progressive, and new things, as well as old, in reference to the spiritual world, will be constantly and successively brought out of the treasure of God's word, of which the divine Spirit is the commentator. How, you ask, does all this apply to the subject in hand? Thus, the earlier a saint lived in this world, the longer *

time for this heavenly pupilage he will have in the next before the resurrection, and he needs more:—the later he lived in this world, the less will he have in the other before the resurrection, and he needs less. Thus, those who enjoy in this world superior advantages on account of living under the clearer dispensation of divine truth in the last ages of the church, shall not have any advantage over those who had less, on account of living in the first ages, since those who had less will have longer time in the future world before the resurrection.

With this idea in view, the passage, in 1 Thess. iv. 15, becomes beautifully intelligible, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent” (that is, shall not go before, anticipate, or have any advantage over,) “those which are asleep—the dead in Christ shall RISE first: *then*” (when they have risen,) “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord.” Those who shall live in the last moment, having had their spirits fully enlightened and prepared for a future existence in the brightness of the latter-day glory before death, shall not “sleep” at all, for there will be no necessity for it; but “shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” “The dead shall be raised incorruptible,” having been prepared for their incorruptible body, but “we shall be changed.” 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

This theory may be seen in the same way to illus-

trate itself consistently when applied to those who are lost. Those who live last in the world, when superior light is around them, sin against greater light than those who lived earlier, and are therefore sooner prepared to have their doleful station fixed finally in hell, in the union of soul and body.

The doctrine we present in reference to the condition of the spirits of the saints in heaven, differs from the idea of a middle state, in a third place, in several important particulars. It excludes the idea of a middle place entirely ; and of course all idea of probation, which is generally attached to it in some form or other. The state of the spirit in heaven, though imperfect, being the celestial childhood of the spirit, is nevertheless final, and not probationary. Our enjoyments there will be in exact proportion to our capacity ; and as fast as our spirits are unfolded will our joys increase.

“The more our spirits are enlarged on earth,
The deeper draughts they shall receive of heaven.”

What an interesting moment to the spirit will be the moment after death ! What scenes will open up before it ! The friends will stand weeping over the now tenantless body, but the spirit is—oh !

My thoughts pursue it where it flies
And trace its wondrous way !

The Christian need have no unpleasant anxiety about what scenes will open to him, for he knows that the glory which will then break upon his astonished spirit will exceed his keenest anticipations. But the wicked, alas ! for him at that awful moment !

Oh ! my soul, come not thou into the secret of his sorrows !

How shocking must thy summons be, O Death !
To him.—

In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement ;
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help ;
But shrieks in vain ! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers !
A little longer ; yet a little longer ;
O ! might she stay to wash away her stains ;
And fit her for her passage ! Mournful sight !
Her very eyes weep blood ; and ev'ry groan
She heaves is big with horror. But the foe,
Like a stanch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close, through ev'ry lane of life ;
Nor misses once the track ; but presses on,
Till forced at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin !

CHAPTER IV.

Sympathy between Heaven and Earth.

“I have seen
A curious child, that dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intently ; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy ; for, murmuring from within
Were heard, sonorous cadences ! whereby
To his belief the Monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea—
E'en such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of faith.”

THE spirit-world is inhabited by beings of a social order, which communicate with each other ; do they also communicate with earth ? We know of at least three distinct order of beings who dwell together in heaven in the highest and holiest fellowships—divine, angelic, and human. Do they sympathize with mortals ? May the footsteps of their presence be seen on earth ? Does the light of their social influence fall upon the path of human life ? and is the animating power of their sympathy felt in the sphere of human experience ? In short, in what relation does the church militant stand to the church triumphant, and

what fellowship and sympathy is there between them?

These are interesting questions; they are often asked, and still oftener do they silently employ the minds of men with the deepest meditations. They are, moreover, questions which are prompted in us by a pious spirit, and by a feeling that is inseparable from the life of a pilgrim. The generation in which we live passes on around us towards the world of spirits; among them are many of our dearest friends who fade from our sight almost daily; in the earnestness of grief we follow after them to the verge of these mortal borders, and when they are gone entirely beyond our sight, we ask, Are they now entirely gone and separated from us, or do their sympathy and love remain with us as fresh and warm as the remembrance of them is treasured up and cherished in our hearts? We know that if they died in Christ they are in heaven, but that does not satisfy our feelings, even if it should satisfy our faith. Though our minds may be quiet, yet our hearts cry out, Do they remember us and love us still?

The impression exists at the present day among many, and it seems to be gaining ground, that the present world and the world of spirits stand at a cold distance from each other, with little or no living sympathy. It seems to be the idea of some, that just as a man who, by some sudden and fortunate change, has been elevated to a higher stage in society, forgets all beneath him, so the saints who die, being elevated higher, forget in this happy change all the relations in which they formerly stood, take no more interest

in the friendships of earth, and would find it a check upon their upward aspirations even to think of those they once loved, but have now left behind. Thus it is supposed that though we look after them with the intensest interest as they go up, they look not back on us: though we love them still, they love us no more!

It is acknowledged that the two worlds did once stand in very tender communication with each other, and that the earth once shared very largely and warmly the sympathies of the heavenly world. This is admitted to have been the case during the old Jewish economy, and also during the time of the Saviour and his apostles at the commencement of the new dispensation. Then not only angels appeared among men, but also departed saints, as in the case of Moses and Elias during the transfiguration on the mount. Since then the gates of the heavenly world are supposed to be closed, and all communication to have ceased. Even angels, it is thought, because they are no more *seen*, have retired from us. The sentiment of the poet that “angel visits” are

“Few and far between,”

has become so popular that it has passed into a musical proverb, which flows in cold eloquence from the lips of all! Even the pulpit has endeavoured to baptize this poetical infidelity, and accordingly it has been set as a gem into many an eloquent sermon. The declaration of the Psalmist that the angels have charge over us to keep us “in all our ways,” is not so beautiful as the chiming “few and far between”

of the poet! It may be beautiful poetry, but it is cold theology; and it is a sentiment that could only become popular in a rationalistic age.

There was a time when heaven "for a little while" withdrew its sympathies from the earth, and in a manner spurned it from its presence. O! what a night of despair was that! It was when man had sinned, and was driven, in consequence of his sin, from the presence of God. Not only did God retire, but all heaven put frowns of anger on. The angels, which had no doubt before been the companions of the happy pair in paradise, were commissioned with orders and power to banish them from Eden. See heaven and earth separate! See God retire! See Adam and Eve, now fallen, the other way

—“With wand’ring steps and slow,
Through Eden take their solitary way.”

Alas! was ever an hour like that? Eden lost! God’s favour lost! Communications with heaven closed! Paradise guarded with the flaming sword of the cherubim turning every way, forbidding man to return to that place late so lovely, so full of heaven. How dreadfully do their countenances reflect the holy displeasure of that God, whose will they are executing against man! But oh! how dark and dreary to Adam and Eve is a world without a God! They look, first upon the wilderness before them, deepening in gloom as their despairing hearts sink within them, and then they cast a last wishful, but almost hopeless glance back upon the Eden from which they are now banished. A sad farewell!

God, however, only retired and made the heavens black between him and fallen man for a time, to give him a faint idea of what the earth is without the light and sympathy of heaven. Soon, however, God began gradually to visit the earth again in its night time. Soon heaven began again to dawn some rays of hope upon the world, and to promise a restoration of that sympathy which had been lost. Though the way to heaven through paradise remained barred, yet some intimations of a “new and living way” were early given. The promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, though it afforded not much light, as its import must have been but little understood, yet it was one star upon which the eye could rest in a world where all else was dark. Abel received a smile upon his sacrifice. Soon the intimations of returning sympathy on the part of heaven became so encouraging, that men looked with confidence upward, and “began to call upon the name of the Lord.” Enoch and Noah found grace in his sight, enjoyed his favour, and “walked with God!” Abraham was visited with glorious promises in the midst of the idolatry of Chaldea; he besieged heaven for favours and won them; and he entertained some heavenly visitors in his tent in the plains of Mamre. Lot was favoured with angelic visits, and shared their warmest interest in his behalf. Isaac received assurances of heavenly sympathy, protection, and favour. Thus all along, and in various ways, did signs appear that heaven and earth were again approaching each other. Happy prospect!

Most beautifully, most clearly, and most sweetly

prophetic, however, was the sympathy which should again be established between heaven and earth, represented to Jacob in a dream when flying before his angry brother Esau towards Haran. Oh! what a vision was that—in the wilderness, and at night! Weary in his journey, and in loneliness of spirit, “he lighted upon a certain place—and he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep!” Is that a place for visions? No doubt the highest blessing, after the sense of God’s favour, for which Jacob hoped, was that he might find oblivion for his troubles, and strength for his weary limbs in

“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep!”

God, however, had his eye upon the outcast pilgrim. Was Jacob alone? He thought so, for he felt forsaken, and it seems not to have entered his mind that God was in that place, and that it was the gate of heaven. How similar are the circumstances of loneliness which surround him, to those which surrounded Adam and Eve when they spent the first night outside of Eden! The wrath of Esau, like the flaming sword of the cherubim, forbade return. Like them, Jacob was lingering with feelings of indescribable anxiety and suspense upon the dreadful border between hope and fear. Like them the wilderness is around and before him. “Thou hast visited me in the night,” exclaimed David, when light from the smiling presence of the Lord dispersed the darkness of his soul; and so, soon after, could Jacob exclaim with joyful surprise. Under weariness and trouble, in spite of his

hard, cold pillow, the spirit of sweet slumbers spread its wings over him, dispersed his cares, and calmed his soul. As he slept, "he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it!" And what delightful promises he spake to the lonely sleeper! but not to him alone, to all his posterity. Here, in a vision of the night, God made known to Jacob that there was a communication open between heaven and earth, that the angels of God ascended and descended continually, and that this should continue until through his seed all the families of the earth had received heavenly blessings. When Jacob awoke out of his sleep, he found that, instead of being alone, as he supposed, God had been in that place, and he knew it not. Instead of lying in a forsaken wilderness, he had been lying at the gate of heaven!

This communication between heaven and earth which was thus shadowed forth in Jacob's prophetic dream, was realized in part during the history of the Jews down to the time of the incarnation. We feel, when we read the history of the Old Testament, that God and the heavenly inhabitants visited the earth, sympathized and communed with men in the freest and most natural way. The same was the case during the time the Saviour sojourned on earth, extending also over that period occupied by the ministry of the apostles. That this communion should afterwards continue, is declared by the Saviour when he says, in evident allusion to the vision of Jacob, "Hereafter

shall ye see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” John i. 51. He would take the place of Jacob as his antetype, the head of a new seed, and continue his presence on earth in the church which is his body; thus he would ensure to them the continued sympathy of heaven, and constant visits from the upper world. That they have, from that time till now, been ministering spirits to saints on earth, none but an infidel can doubt.

It is sin which separates man from God, and which consequently hinders that intimate and conscious communion between heaven and earth which existed when man was in a state of holy innocence, and which is again restored, in part, in the economy of salvation. When our first parents were in their holy state, God was their companion; he walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and no doubt as long as their hearts were right toward him, they met him with confidence and sought his presence with great delight. But sin, that great evil, separated them from God. As soon as they had sinned, a consciousness of guilt and a sense of shame and unworthiness took possession of their hearts, and they “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” If angels before had been visitors to that paradise of delights, they too retired, for what fellowship has light with darkness, and what communion can holy beings enjoy with such as are defiled with sin? Although God had not entirely cast them off, yet they had no more confidence in his presence; shame and guilt beget fear, fear cast out love, and when love is gone no

desire for communion remains. Thus when a person whom we have befriended has treated us despitefully in a secret way, though we show no signs of hatred towards him, yet he will avoid us and separate himself from us.

Sin is still the same. The prodigal still loves a far country more than the tender endearments of his father's house. The farther he removes from God, the less communion will there be between them; the less he loves him, the less will he see his footsteps in the earth or hear his voice. So far from delighting in the presence of God, the wicked man would rather have rocks and mountains to fall upon him and hide him from his presence. Is it a wonder, then, that heaven and earth have taken such a sad farewell of each other? When heaven makes a gentle approach to seek fellowship with man, he closes his eyes, ears, and heart, falls upon the earth, hides his face in the dust from God, and cries, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways!"

That some men do not desire such an intimate fellowship between heaven and earth to exist, and that they do not seek after it and love it, is no evidence that it does not exist. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him," and he reveals himself to them as he does not to the world. Neither is the fact that Christians themselves are so little conscious of it, an evidence that such communion is not possible: it is only an evidence that they do not live up to their privileges. We may live in the midst of a community in which the most excellent and refined society exists, and yet we may not share in its advantages; we may

not even be conscious of its existence. The reason simply is, that we have not been introduced into it; and the reason why we are not introduced into it, is either because we are not worthy of it, or because we have not sought it in the proper way. So here. We are surrounded with spiritual beings, they are not only ascending and descending from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, but they also encamp around us, attend us in all our ways with their holy ministrations: we are capable of feeling and enjoying their presence, and of being introduced into their mysterious companionship; but our affections are too gross, our conceptions too dull and earthly.

We saw in a previous chapter that heaven, as to its locality, is at a distance from the earth, so that the Saviour, in ascending to it, ascended far above all heavens. In space, therefore, and as a part of God's physical universe, heaven is removed from the earth. This distance in space, however, is no more a hindrance to the existence of social sympathies than it is to the existence of physical dependence. It is not improbable, as has been supposed, that heaven is located on the central orb of the universe;—that all systems with their subordinate planets revolve around and are balanced by it, as our earth and the other planets of the solar system revolve around and are balanced by the sun. All the orbs in the universe, and our earth with them, must be united to that central orb by the laws of gravitation, and are kept in balance by centripetal and centrifugal force. Here is mutual relation, connexion, and dependence, as mysterious as any social sympathy would be at the

same distance. The existence of such physical dependence, on the supposition that heaven is such a central orb, is sure. Indeed, whatever place heaven may occupy in the physical universe, our globe, as part of the great whole, must be united to it by secret mysterious connecting laws. Why then should we doubt the existence of a medium through which the living beings which dwell on these orbs can communicate with each other? Even embodied spirits, as among men, are capable of annihilating space, as in the case of the magnetic telegraph, and of instituting almost momentary communion between the greatest distances. Suppose death should invade a family at one end of the magnetic line, a related family at the other end, thousands of miles off, could be invited to mingle their tears of sympathetic sorrow with those bereft at the dying moment, before the first gush of their grief had subsided!

If the physical world can furnish such astonishing media of communication, how shall a proper medium fail in the world of spiritual existence? The physical connexion which we know to exist by laws of attraction and gravitation between the different orbs in the universe, affords a strong presumptive proof that there is also a moral and social connexion. Or shall we make the strange and unnatural supposition, that these worlds are physically united and dependent on each other, but that no social sympathy is possible? It is much more reasonable to conclude, that God has created this physical universe, and connected it by laws of mutual dependence as a platform for a vast social economy, constituted by the intelligences of

these different worlds. If the introduction of sin into our world has so long hindered us from realizing this blessed fact, it is no evidence that this must always be the case. In and by the Church, our fallen world must again be restored into proper sympathy with the unfallen universe—especially with heaven. When we enter her mysterious and holy communion, *then* we “*are come* unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.”

It has been already remarked, that heaven is inhabited, so far as we know, by three orders of intelligences—divine, angelic, and human. We come now to inquire in what relation we stand to each of these, while we are here on earth, and what is the nature of their sympathies with us, and of ours with them. Have we any communion with them? and if we have, What is its nature? and in what way do we enjoy it? Are these beings present on the earth, and how? Reflections on these subjects cannot fail to bring us consciously near to the awful world of spirits; and will have a tendency to make us feel that heaven and earth are not so coldly related as cold and unreflecting hearts are ready to imagine.

SECTION I.

DIVINE SYMPATHY.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.”
—PAUL.

“There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” These three communicate with earth. They are one in essence, but three in person; they are one in object, but diverse in their operations. Each one’s presence on the earth, and each one’s communion and sympathy with us, has something in it peculiarly his own. Hence says the apostle, when he assures the saints at Corinth of the sympathy of these divine persons, “The *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the *love* of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.” Let us see what is the nature of each one’s presence on the earth, and what is the nature of each one’s sympathy with us.

“Truly our fellowship is with the FATHER.” God the Father dwells in heaven. Though he is everywhere present, yet the Bible conveys the idea that he is present in heaven in a peculiar way, in such a way as he is present nowhere else. He dwelt of old at Jerusalem in the awful cloud between the cherubim, as he did not in all the earth beside; so also he dwells in the holiest of all in heaven as he does not in any other part of the universe. Behold “heaven is his throne, the earth is his footstool.” Heaven is the centre of his operations, and perhaps we might say

of his being. If God is thus peculiarly in heaven, and we are upon the earth, how can it be said that our fellowship is with the Father? There must be a mode of his presence on earth. Proper views of his omnipresence will at once solve this difficulty. From heaven his presence, and with his presence his tender mercies, extend over all his works. Every part of the universe is bound to his throne, and looks towards it, and all is transfused with the power, the love, the light, and the joy of his presence. His presence is therefore really upon earth in all places; and between all beings to which his presence extends, and the great central throne of his being, there must be a living communication. In this sense, it is truly said, in him all things live, and move, and have their being. The earth, then, as the sphere of human life, stands in the radiant circle of his presence. How awfully near him are we!

What is near? God. He is near in that which constitutes his essential nature, and that is love. "The *love* of God," says Paul, "be with you." GOD IS LOVE. His love, therefore, is omnipresent. Of his presence in this way, we may be the most sweetly conscious, even by observing the presence and operations of his plastic hand in the world around us. It is not Pantheism on the one hand, nor poetry on the other, when we say that God is in everything around us. We may safely say of the seasons in nature—

"These, as they change, ALMIGHTY FATHER, these
Are but the varied GOD. The rolling year
Is full of THEE. Forth in the pleasing spring
THY beauty walks, THY tenderness and love."

Every germ that is evolving, every flower that blooms, presents to us the moving presence of God. God is not the grass, neither is the grass God, but it *is* God that "clothes the grass." God is not the flower, neither is it a part of God, but it *is* God which "arrays" it with colours of loveliness far exceeding Solomon in all his glory. If it is God who clothes the grass and paints the flower, then his presence is there where the grass is clothed, and where the flower is painted. It may be said that this is done by the laws of nature, and that God's actual presence there is not necessary to produce such effects. I ask, has God then made of these laws of nature independent gods, who create by their own power? Is it not rather his presence, which filleth all, that animates these laws and makes them operative? where they are operative, therefore, there is his presence. Whenever we conceive of the operations of the laws of nature in the world, as disconnected with the power of his immediate presence, at the place where such operations take place, we deny practically his omnipresence. The omnipresence of his power is the basis of all being. The omnipresence of his love is the ground of all our fellowship with him; and it is because God is love, and omnipresent in that love, that, even here on earth, our fellowship is truly with the Father.

We read of a traveller who lost himself amid the arid sand deserts of Africa. He sought long, but in vain, for a path by which to find again the habitations of man. Struggling amid hot and yielding sand, he became at last so weary and so parched with thirst that he despaired. He prayed to Heaven for help,

but it seemed to him that he was entirely cut off from heaven. He felt as if the divine presence did not extend to that desolate place. At last, looking around for a place where he might lie down and die forsaken, as he supposed, alike by heaven and earth, his eye fell upon a solitary flower that hung beside a stone in that waste of sandy desolation. "God is here!" he exclaimed, "God is here!" He had now a proof that even that place was not cut off from heavenly sympathies. His heart became buoyant, and his limbs strong; he took heart to go on with fresh hopes, and soon he reached an oasis where he refreshed himself with water, and rested in the shade: he was afterwards taken up by a passing caravan, and reached safely his home and his friends. Was he mistaken when he said, on seeing the flower, "God is here!" That blooming flower was his manifestation there; it was the evidence of his life-giving presence there in the desert. He felt, and properly so, that if that flower stood in living connexion with Him in heaven who made it bloom, that he too might be assured of the presence of heavenly sympathy. Under a sense of this fact, ever cheerful, the Christian may sing—

"Should fate command me to the utmost verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes;
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on th' Atlantic isles: 'tis naught to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy."

He who firmly believes in the omnipresence of God, as exhibited in the cxxxixth Psalm, can have no difficulty in believing the possibility of saints on earth having fellowship with the Father. "Thou compassest my path and my lying down—Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Proper views of God's providence will no less aid us in getting proper ideas of God's omnipresent love. By the providence of God, we understand "the almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand." We are the subjects of this providence, and so far as we share in it, we share the sympathy and fellowship of the author of it. His providential presence is clearly seen and warmly and joyfully felt on the earth.

The providence of God is employed in upholding, and also in governing, not only the physical world, but also all living creatures. In upholding the phy-

sical world, it must extend to the smallest atom; for in an atom itself there can be no inherent power to sustain itself. If God weighs the hills in a balance, he must weigh every particle of sand of which it is composed; if he sustains the mighty orbs of heaven, he must sustain also the smallest material particle in them. If all the atoms of the universe together, as a whole, can generate no sustaining power, but need themselves as a whole to be sustained, how can any one atom generate such power? In this respect, the whole is as helpless as the least atom of which it is composed. As the providential presence of God in the earth must extend to the smallest particle of matter, so must it also extend to all life, and comprehend the smallest event in the history of man. In each event of life, however insignificant it may seem, we must trace the moving hand of God. Even the hairs of our head are all numbered, and one falls to the ground only when God permits. The giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, God marks for a reward; and when a bow is drawn at a venture, the unerring hand of Him who rules the universe takes charge of it, and directs it to the place where it will accomplish its purpose.

Thus every event, however insignificant, which gives the least turn to the current of our life, is the beckoning hand of God. Every adversity which starts up in our way to check us, is like the angel who stood with drawn sword in the way of Balaam. Yes, every joy and every sorrow that meet us in life, may be looked upon, the former as the smile, and the latter as the loving reproof of our heavenly Father. Having a

clear and true conception of God's providential presence in the world, we shall feel ourselves beset on all sides with the whispers, and the wooings of Him whose presence fills immensity. This is to us a conscious evidence of God's nearness to us on earth, and a plain proof that we, who are the subjects of his providential government, share in the sweetest manner in his divine sympathies. A dear friend who attends us with his kindness and with his counsel, is not more really near us than our heavenly Father with his providential sympathies. We may feel his nearness as really and as sensibly as we feel in sickness the cooling hand of a fellow-being upon our fevered brow.

When Count Zinzendorf, the pious Moravian missionary, went up the North Branch of the Susquehanna to preach to the Indians, the country was yet a waste howling wilderness—

Where nothing dwelt but beasts of prey,
And men as fierce and wild as they.

One evening he struck up his tent on the banks of the river in the valley of Wyoming; he kindled a fire in it, spread his blankets on the ground, and sat upon them absorbed in thought. That same night the Indians of the valley had laid a plot to kill him. They went in a band to his tent. Silently they creep up and look in between the folds into the tent. Murder is in their hearts! But what a sight! There he sits, the holy man, in deep thought, his time-honoured locks hanging upon his shoulders, and a heavenly serenity playing upon his face. A huge serpent, attracted by the fire, is crawling over his leg; but he

heeds neither the serpent nor the Indians. Why should he—"There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling!" There he sits; how easy it would be for the Indians to accomplish their murderous intentions, for he is not aware of their presence. But they do not, for the presence of God's providential love is there, and will operate in its own way. See! they are whispering to each other outside of the tent, after they have long stood in breathless silence and astonishment—"That man is protected by the Great Spirit, and we cannot injure him!" They retire, and not until some time afterwards, did the missionary find out that they had been there. When they became his friends, they told him.—Now was not God's presence really there in the wilderness? Yes. As sure as the mouth of that serpent was closed, and as sure as the hearts of those Indians were changed from the daring deed of murder, so sure was the cause there by which these effects were produced. And what was that cause? It was the same God who closed the mouths of the lions, when Daniel was cast in among them; it was the same God, which opened the heart of Lydia, that disposed the hearts of those murderous Indians with pity towards the Lord's anointed. Zinzendorf, like Jacob, could say, "Surely the Lord is in this place!" His presence was there as really as was the deliverance which was effected by it.

Such is our fellowship with God the Father;—but our fellowship is not only with the Father, but also "**WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.**" Jesus Christ is a mediator not only between God and sinners, but be-

tween heaven and earth, between God and the world, between the finite and the infinite, between the creature and the Creator. In his mediatorial person all these meet in the most complete harmony. Such is his mysterious being, that he unites in himself heaven and earth. When he was on earth, he could say, I am “the Son of man which is in heaven.” And after he has ascended into heaven, he can say to his people on earth, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” He is now in heaven as the proper home and centre of his existence, but not in such a way as to forbid his presence on the earth. He is the one “of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,” and in him they are all one family. He is head over all things to the church, which is his body. His church is a family, part of which is in heaven, and part on earth; but his presence is alike with those who are coming up out of great tribulation in the militant church, and with those who through faith and patience have already inherited the promises. This is a great mystery!

The presence of the Son in the world is different from the presence of the Father. Though we cannot separate the operations of these two divine persons, yet we can distinguish between them. As we can distinguish their persons, so we can distinguish their operations. God the Father is in the world as creator and upholder; the Son, as preserver and redeemer. The doctrine of divine providence stands related to both. To the Father as upholder, to the Son as preserver and redeemer. Hence God’s upholding power extends to the evil and the good, but Christ’s preserv-

ing and redeeming power extends effectively only to the saints. But as God created the world by Christ, so he also sustains it by Christ, for out of Christ God is, to this fallen world, a consuming fire. The Father is in the world then, sustaining it as a platform, on which the Son carries on his economy of saving grace. God upholds the world for the sake of Christ. As a fallen world God could not sustain it without reference to Christ, for as fallen it stands in rebellious opposition to him, and he cannot, consistently with his character, sustain that which stands in an attitude of rebellion against his order, except "in hope." Thus then, although the Father has not withdrawn himself from the world, as to his omnipresence and power, and although it still rests on him as the source of creating and sustaining power, and is still the object of his love, yet the preserving and redeeming of it, he has placed in the hands of the Son as the mediatorial God-man.

God the Son, then, is in the world as its HOPE. As such he was made known to the fallen pair in Paradise; as such he was held up to prophetic vision under the Jewish economy; as such, in the fulness of time, he really appeared; as such he is now on the mediatorial throne; and as such we look for his second appearing, when he shall come finally to put the last enemy under his feet. He is the only warrant on which creation, animate and inanimate, leans in hope. On his mediatorial virtue alone the Christian rests his hopes for heaven; on its account alone the penitent hopes for pardon; on its account alone can a sinner hope for another merciful moment! To him all things,

even in the natural world, are “subjected in hope.” On his account alone the new-fledged bird can hope to mount upward and sing; on his account alone the rising sun can hope to shine on its way and set in glory; on his account alone, spring, when she draws her first pencilings, can hope to finish the picture of her loveliness. In short everything *bending forward into its future history*, leans on him in hope; take him away as the hope of the world, and all will tumble momentarily into a hopeless wreck. Look, then, out into the world, see nature reigning in joyous life, see the pulse of animated existence beat with the liveliest hope, and know that for all this Christ is the only warrant. In it see his presence. The whole world is a barren fig-tree, which stands, on his intercessions, only in hope! Wherever, therefore, we see the pulse of hope beating, there we see his presence as the cause and ground of these pulsations.

Here we can see one point of difference between the mode of the Father’s presence in the world, and that of the Son. We might suppose the Son, as the warrant of the world’s hope, to withdraw, so that all would sink into wreck, and yet the Father’s omnipresence would be as much in the place of that wreck, as it was before it was a wreck. In this way he is present even in hell. Of his presence in the world, in the way of hope, we may be the most sweetly conscious. Do we feel the joyful beatings of hope? there is the lively consciousness of fellowship with the Son.

It is not enough, however, that God the Son should be in the world as its hope, he must also be in it as

that which this hope involves and promises, and which we expect in this hope to realize. What is that? When the world is taught to hope, it is taught to look for a restoration of that which it lost in its fall. It lost LIFE. For LIFE it hopes. Life it must receive. The life of Christ must therefore be in it. He is the life of the world. He is not only in heaven to give life to those who shall enter there at last, but he is in the world as its life. This life is in his church. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

In order to get a still clearer idea of the manner of the Saviour's presence in the world, and of our fellowship with him as Christians, it is necessary that we get a clear idea of what we receive of him as the basis of our salvation. Some look upon his appearance in the world as having been transient and phenomenal; they think that he left the world in his ascension as to his mediatorial person, and is now only in the world in his spirit, whose influence is imparted to us. This idea, however, does not answer the full import of the many passages of scripture which speak of him as the life of his people, nor of the passage where he says, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Neither does it explain the strength of those passages which speak of the church as his body, and of believers as living in him. It will hereafter be seen, that the manner of the Holy Spirit's presence in the world can be clearly distinguished (not separated), from the manner of the Son's presence, as the Son's is from that of the Father.

If we look upon the incarnation of the Son as a transient event, and not as an abiding fact in the world, which is to be continued in the church as his body to the end of time, we will also have superficial and imperfect ideas of the resources of salvation which he brought into the world. Hence some say that he was in the world merely as a pattern and teacher, and that we are saved by following him just in the same way as Plato and Socrates were followed by their disciples. Some say that he came only to make salvation possible, by satisfying in some way the demands of the law for our past transgressions, and by his doctrines conforming our lives to the law of holiness, and thus rendering us assistance to live righteously in future. Some, not satisfied with these representations, look upon the case in this way:—the Son satisfies the law for us, and thus we are pardoned; the Holy Ghost gives us life and sanctifies us. This last alone comprehends the true wants of man, but it mistakes in the manner in which it supposes the gospel view of salvation to meet these wants. It ascribes the giving of life to the Spirit, whereas that is the prerogative of the Son, it being the office of the Spirit to *quicken* that life, the ground and source of which is in Christ. Christ is in the world what the above schemes represent him to be, but he is *more*. He is the way, and the truth, but he is also the life. (John xiv. 6.) He was given for the life of the world, and he remains in it as such always. In the first chapter of John, we are told that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and by this grace is our salvation. What was this grace which came? In the verse pre-

vious, we are told that it is his "fulness." "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." That this fulness was his life, we are told in a previous verse, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

It is plain that the fall, which divided and separated heaven and earth, affected man soul and body; it affected, therefore, the physical world, with which the body stands connected, as well as the moral world. As salvation by Christ affects soul and body, so it must also affect the moral and physical world as their basis. Christ is the life of both. For this reason, the incarnation was necessary; not only that, as the human and divine are united in his person, so might the physical and moral world find their harmony in each other; but also, as his mediatorial life was in a union of the divine and human, so that life might pervade, unite, and harmonize the moral and physical world.

It is plain that it is life which is needed to surmount the ruins of the fall. Death was threatened as the consequence of Adam's sin. Paul tells us that it followed, for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." The experience of the world teaches us the same, for generation after generation, since Adam has sinned, have been pressed into the grave. The fact is before us; not only as to its physical phenomena, but death in a moral and spiritual sense.

What the precise nature of death is, we do not know, but it no doubt consists in a separation of the immortal spirit from God, in whom alone it can live. It is only a superficial view, to make death consist in a separa-

tion of the soul from the body. Death is to be "alienated from the life of God." Neither is death a cessation of existence, for Adam still continued to exist after his fall in soul and in body, and in these two in union; even eternal death is not an eternal cessation of life. Death is rather a continuation of the spirit's existence, in such affinities, and under such laws, as run counter to his nature, in which its being can never perish, and yet with which it can never fully and freely sympathize. Into such laws and affinities, human life seems to have fallen by the sin of Adam.

It must farther be understood, however, that sin and death did not merely enter into the individual at the fall and affect him in an isolated way, but the evil affected the *world*, as comprehending the whole sphere of his being. It affected no human life merely, but the basis of human life; not human beings, but humanity, as the general of which Adam and all his posterity are the individual and particular. When we say that death is in the world, we do not mean merely that men die, but we mean that the power which produces their death is in the world. The event or phenomenon of death is only the effect of a deeper cause. This cause pervades the moral and physical world, through which it affects soul and body; mysteriously does it reign in the sphere of human existence. Of this cause we can only get a correct idea when we get a clear idea of the difference between human beings and humanity. Human beings are exhibitions or manifestations of individual life, having their basis in humanity. Individual life is the particular, humanity

is the general, in which the individual stands, and on which it is dependent.

When Adam fell, he fell not alone, but humanity fell—death invaded its vitality, and having affected the general, it necessarily affected the individual, and so passed upon all men. Having affected the basis of the race, it must, consequently, affect each individual that is born of that race; thus that which is “born of the flesh is flesh,” and we are “by nature” the children of wrath. This is the seat of natural depravity.

The fall then brought sin, which is an opposition to divine law—a law of its own. This law is not connected with God, and is disowned by him, consequently it is a law of death. It will thus give us a correct idea of the state of the world since the fall, when we say, that the fall brought into the sphere of human life, and has pervaded that sphere with death-laws and death-affinities, in which all human beings stand, and in which they must all perish, unless they are raised out of them.

To do this, the Incarnate, Mediatorial, God-man is in the world. He connected himself with the world and with humanity, through the incarnation, that he might introduce into the world a new humanity, a new basis of human life. Hence he became the second Adam, a quickening Spirit, and the first-born among many brethren. He was born into the world of a virgin, that he might be truly human. “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, *made under the law*, to redeem them that were under the law.” He was “made under

the law" of a fallen humanity. Because we "were in bondage under the elements of the world," he, to redeem us, must cast himself under the same bondage, not to be subdued by it, but to triumph over it. He cast himself under the power of these death-laws of a fallen humanity, was borne down under them into the grave, but rose over them and out of them, surmounted these elements of bondage by the elements of liberty and life. By the power of his resurrection, he sprung new laws of life through the realms of death which had pervaded the whole sphere of humanity. As the fallen Adam was the centre in which all these death-laws and death-affinities met, and from which they pervaded the whole race; so the risen Christ is the centre and source of life-laws and life-affinities, from which the streams of saving vitality flow out through all space and time, as the basis of a new life to individuals.

These life-laws proceeding from him who is the resurrection and the life, constitute the church. It is this divine vitality, proceeding from the life of Christ, born anew from the grave, and out of the elements of Adamic bondage, that makes the church a life-bearing and life-giving constitution in the world. The church is his body. To be saved, is to be united to his body as a living member of it. Just as human life pervades and animates a human body, so the life of Christ pervades and animates his body, the church. These life-laws in the church pervade all space and all time, for they are the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. As a confirmation of this idea, and as a clear exhibition of it, let the following language be carefully studied.

“That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” (Eph. i. 18-23.) The fulness of Christ is certainly his life, and this fulness filleth all in all.

We have said that the incarnate Saviour is in the world as its life, and that this life constitutes the church, and becomes thus the basis of all individual piety and salvation. Lest this should be passed over as mystical on the one hand, or as mere cant on the other, we will endeavour to settle it more definitely in our minds. To do this, it is necessary to get some idea of the nature of life itself. We speak much of life, but do we form in our minds a clear idea of its nature while we speak?

What is life? It is not motion; it is not influence. These are effects of life, and not life itself. It is nothing material. It is not heat. In the tree it is not root, sap, bark, wood, limb, leaf, flower, fruit, nor all these combined. Is it not the power which combines and animates them? In the animal frame it is not skin, muscle, flesh, bone, nor all these together. In

intellectual being, it is not understanding, will, affections, passions, nor the union of all these. What then is life? It is deeper than all effects. It is an **INVISI-
BLE GENERAL LAW**, lying beneath and behind all manifestations; the hidden, quiet, powerful, and mysterious basis of all tangible being. It extends through all time and pervades all space.

Taking this view of the nature of life, we can easily conceive of Christ being in the world as its life, and how his life can really form the basis of the life of every individual Christian. The subject loses much of its mystery. That a law of death has been introduced into the world's constitution by the fall of Adam, and that under the power of that law generation after generation sink into the tomb and into spiritual death, is a *fact*; why may not the resurrection triumph of Christ have introduced life-laws equally as powerful and extensive, in which the saints shall stand, live, and grow with the vigour of eternal youth.

We have facts in nature which are equally mysterious, and yet we know them to exist. These are the laws of gravitation. These laws pervade the universe. Wherever matter exists, there they are to influence it. These laws extend from system to system, from planet to planet, from atom to atom. An orb sailing through space, is guided by these laws; and a stone cast up into the air, at any spot in space, is brought down to the earth by them. Are these laws, though unseen, less real than the planets which they sustain, move, and direct? Who believes this?

Again, look at organized matter; it all rests in a law. The grain of wheat, or the acorn, or any seed,

is only matter; why then does it grow? Because, though it be only matter, it is matter in certain relations and affinities which constitute an organization. This organized matter rests in a certain law, and this law, like the law of gravitation, pervades all space, and, according to its own nature, brings matter into an organization which will manifest this law in the form of a grain of wheat, an acorn, and afterwards a stalk of wheat or a tree. It is in this case again the unseen which is the real; what is seen is only the manifestation of the unseen, the real, and the true. This living law of organization is not simple, but very complex, for it takes as many forms as there are different manifestations of it in the different germs of plants, and races, and orders of animals. Do not such laws exist and pervade the whole realm of nature? If not, how have we these uniform and constant manifestations of them?

Why should we doubt then, that the Saviour in rising over the law of sin and death in the resurrection, sprung through the sphere of human life, laws of divine vitality, in which to stand is eternal life. Why should we doubt that these life-laws are in the church, where contact with them is possible, and where the manifestations of them are the new birth of souls from death into eternal life? Why should we doubt, that the believing spirit comes in contact with that life, and under its power, when it comes in contact with the functions of the church, through which this life is communicated. These functions are all the means of grace, the ministry, the sacraments, and all subordinate ordinances of the church. To be in the

church really, is to be under the power of these laws of life. By being introduced into the church vitally, we escape the laws of sin and of death, which is the consequence of sin. And now, "how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." How deep! "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

Here we have exhibited to us the transition of which we speak, not only from death to life, but from the power and basis which produce death into the power and presence of that which produce and sustain life. That such a transition should take place, is not more mysterious than some things which we find in nature. Take, as an illustration, the laws of crystallization. We find scattered over the face of

the earth, crystals of smooth and polished sides and regular angles. These are composed of quartz. This quartz may and does exist in nature, in a separate and elementary state, and, consequently, different in form from its crystallized state. When it exists thus with its particles in a state of separation, those particles are under the ordinary law of gravitation, like all matter. But when these particles are brought into certain relations, conditions, and affinities, they are seized upon momentarily by a stronger law, that of crystallization, which changes their previous form and affinities, makes them free from the law of gravitation, and forms them into a regularly formed crystal! This law of crystallization mysteriously pervades all nature, and wherever it finds matter under certain conditions, it seizes upon it, forms it into a crystal, and holds it firmly under that form in a crystallized state. Now, let matter under the common law of gravitation represent man under the Adamic law of death, and matter in a crystallized state represent man changed into the life-law of Christ, and the idea will be clearly seen. One is not more mysterious than the other, why should it be less possible? the one is a fact, why may not the other be? As the law of crystallization can seize upon matter in another form, and under another power, and change it into a regular and beautiful crystal, so the human spirit "in bondage under the elements of the world," is seized upon by that law of life which sprung from the grave in the resurrection of Christ, and which now pervades the sphere of human life in the church, which is his mystical body, and is by its power transformed into a new

creature in Christ Jesus. He can say truly, “for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. viii. 2.)

The foregoing observations and illustrations, will give us some idea of the mode of the Saviour’s presence in the world. With less it could not have been done. This will open the way for us to see what are the sympathies of heaven and earth *in him*, and *in the church*, his body. This enables us to feel the reality and force of his promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Here we see, that, though he is incarnate still, and as to his person as such confined to a place, yet it is possible for him to be really in the world. Though as head of the church he is in heaven, at the right hand of God, above all principalities and powers, filling the church above with the fulness of his divine life, he can be also on the earth as really and truly as he is in heaven; and saints on earth may as truly feel his nearness, and enjoy his divine fellowship and sympathy. Thus he unites in his mystical person the whole redeemed family in heaven and on earth, and makes them one in himself, and one in each other, by the highest and holiest of all communions—*the communion of a divine life*.

He manifests himself in each believer on earth, and dwells really in him, as a member of his sacred body, so that each saint on earth may say without a figure, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” “For we which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also

of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Thus, in every believer on earth, his life, and consequently his presence, is manifested, so that the communion of saints is a communion in him. He is in heaven as the great life-giving heart, the beating pulse of which vibrates in every Christian's heart on earth. The head, and the body, and the members, are all one; but the head is in heaven, the body and members partly there, and partly here, but—

"All joined in Christ the living head."

The bride and bridegroom are one, but the bride is in heaven, and the bridegroom on earth, there also must he be. Truly heaven and earth are brought together in the most blessed nearness and sympathy in Christ and the church. This is a great mystery—but a blessed one. Of Christ it may be truly said—

"O! wondrous truth to fabling fiction given,
Of one that walked on earth and hid his head in heaven;
 Whose stature is eternity,
 His crown the living sky!
Or rather like a spirit's love,
 Whose form to mortal sense is all invisible;
Yet still around doth dwell and move,
 Around, yet how we cannot tell."

This brings heaven and earth into near and sweet relation. While, in reference to the Father, we recognise his presence *around us* in the world, we find the Son in the world *in us*, as the mysterious but precious basis of our life and comfort as Christians. Is here no sympathy? We are partakers of the divine nature! We are in him as he is in the Father! We

are children, sons, brethren, heirs, with him! Yes, these heavenly things are ours while here on earth. We feel it! Every conscious beating of the pulse of eternal life in us, and every foretaste of heavenly joys, is an evidence of his presence and sympathy in the world, and a **REAL** communion with his divine life. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

It is, however, not only in the love of God the Father, and in the grace, or life, of our Lord Jesus Christ, that heaven and earth commune with each other, but also in "*the communion of the Holy Ghost.*" (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) As "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," so there are three modes of manifestation of their sympathies on earth with men. In the communion of the Holy Ghost, heaven and earth reciprocate in the fellowship of one *influence*, or quickening spirit, as in the grace of Jesus Christ they are one in the fellowship of one *life*. The Spirit, too, is in heaven, as his peculiar home, but also on earth as the sphere of his divine operations, thus uniting both in him. As there is "one body," the church, so there is "one Spirit" influencing and quickening all.

The mode of the Spirit's presence in the earth, is clearly to be distinguished from the mode of the presence of either the Father or the Son. The Son is in the world as the source or basis of divine life to the church and believers, the Holy Ghost as the condition on which the manifestations of this life depend. Just as in the natural world, the heat of the sun, the

rains, and the dews, and the richness of the soil, are the conditions of vegetation, while the seeds and grains in the ground are the cause; so in the sphere of spiritual life. Christ's life-presence in the church is the ground or germ of life to all believers, while the Holy Spirit is the all-comprehending, all-overshadowing, and all-pervading condition. As He at first moved and brooded over the embryo and chaotic world, evolving order, life, and beauty, so he moves over the church as the new creation in Christ Jesus, implanting in the souls of men the regenerating life of Christ, and evolving that life, as a quickening Spirit. As the spirit of spring calls forth every germ of life from the earth, and clothes the natural world in beauty, so it is the office of the Holy Spirit to labour in the church, by his influence clothing believers with the fruits and graces of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, purity. As a silent monitor, he warns and reproves; as a quickening Spirit, he enlivens and cheers; as a comforting Spirit, he allays and soothes. Wherever, therefore, these fruits appear, there must be the communicating presence of the Spirit. If there be in love, which is one of his fruits, a real commingling of the heart that loves with the object which begets that love, then a saint on earth has real communion with the Spirit. If there be in joy a real conscious and wakeful contact of the soul with the source which has waked that joy, then the soul which experiences joy in the Holy Ghost is in felt communion with the third person in the Trinity. That peace in the soul which passes understanding, must have a true

and living cause, and the soul must come into actual contact with the power that caused it. Equally certain is it, that purity is effected in the heart by the operating contact of that pure Spirit which is the only sanctifier. So of all the other fruits of the Spirit, begotten in the heart by the Spirit. If the fruit of a tree is in living contact and communion with the tree itself, then the fruits of the Spirit in us must stand in real and living contact and communion with the Holy Spirit which has called them forth. Hence, also, it is said that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and that our bodies are his temple; and when we pray, he is said to make intercession for us with “groanings that cannot be uttered.”

There was once a careless, wicked, and daring young man riding through a lonely place in the woods. Suddenly the passage came into his mind, “Prepare to meet thy God.” He tried to banish it from his thoughts, but could not; it raised its trumpet-voice louder and louder in his now troubled soul. It gave him no rest until he dismounted his horse, kneeled down, and prayed for the pardon of his sins in deep penitence. He became a Christian. That passage was one he had heard in Sabbath School. The Holy Spirit had called it up to his mind. This is part of his office, for he shall “bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Now, was he not, I ask, as really present there as the effect which was produced by his operations? There was an actual communion between him and that soul. Heaven and earth met in that spot and exchanged their sympathies.

There, in yonder quiet room, or it may be in a lonely garret, lies a dying Christian. Though racked and torn in body by unyielding disease, yet there is a smile on his cheek, the light of joy in his eye,

“And heavenly peace with balmy wing”

lies serene on his brow, like sunlight upon the autumnal landscape. There is nothing in his circumstances that can be the source of his peace, rather all looks lonely and fading. It is the Comforter in him! He is surely there working at his spirit, and as one after the other of his heart-strings break, jarring the whole body, He allays their trembling motion, so that the spirit does not feel the pangs of sundering. Is He not there? If not, why then is he called the Comforter whom the Father will send to abide with his children for ever? If he is not there, then what power is it that produces such peace, at a moment and under circumstances, when nothing else could? Has such an effect no cause? and if it has, does not that cause stand in living connexion with its effect while it is producing it? As sure as the heat of the sun is in the expanding germ or swelling bud; as sure as the light of the sun is on the object which it enlightens, on the grass which it makes green, or on the petals of the flowers which it paints with such Eden-like beauty, so sure is the Holy Spirit in actual contact and communion with the heart around which the fruits of the Spirit are clustering.

We have now exhibited the mode of the divine presence in the world, in the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and endeavoured to illustrate the

fact and manner of their presence and communion with saints on earth. From these considerations, it will be seen that there is a sympathy between the saints on earth, and the divine beings in heaven. I have not spoken of the thousand details in which these sympathies express themselves. This would be to write a history of Christian experience, which would make as many huge volumes as there have been children of God from the beginning of the world to this day. He manifests himself to his own as he does not to the world, and the secret of the Lord is always with them that fear him. A blessed, a soul-transporting, a heavenly secret!

It is not therefore cant, meaningless and idle as the wind, when the Psalmist says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart." There is a world of joy and comfort in such language as this, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." It means something when the Saviour declares that *his* presence should be with his disciples on the earth to the end of the world; and when he says, "Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him and sup with him, and he with me." "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Paul speaks not empty words when he declares the mystery hid for ages to be "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It means something when

the Saviour says, on the eve of his visible departure from earth, “I will pray the Father; and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” “What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?”

The *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the *love* of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.

SECTION II.

ANGELIC SYMPATHY.

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep.
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold,
Both day and night. How often, from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to others' note,
Singing their great Creator! Oft in bands,
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds,
In full harmonic numbers joined, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven.

There are in heaven not only divine beings, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but also angelic. Angels are created beings, having natures differing from God on the one hand, and from man on the other. Being created, they are not of divine na-

ture, for that is uncreated. That their natures differ from human, is evident from what is said of our Saviour, that when he took our nature, “ he took not on him the nature of angels.”

When these angelic beings were created, is not known. We find them, however, from its earliest history, interested in this world, and employed in connexion with it. We are told that when God laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Though from the earliest ages employed in the history of this earth, yet the scriptures represent them as having their proper home in heaven. Their employments and enjoyments are chiefly about the central throne of God’s universal kingdom. There, in the royal Salem of heaven, they gather around him with the deepest reverence and love ; there they praise his name, and “ do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.”

As these angels dwell in that place where God more immediately resides, where the mediatorial person of Christ is, and where is heaven, as their proper home, and as they are continually “ about him,” and being holy beings, sympathize with him in all his schemes, it is natural to conclude that they enter, with active interest, into all the merciful movements of Heaven towards this fallen world. Like obedient and loving children in their father’s house, they love what he loves, and poise on waiting wing to do what he desires to have done. What seems thus to be a reasonable deduction, is confirmed by both scripture and the experience of the church.

It has already been remarked, in a previous section, that by the fall, heaven and earth were separated, and their mutual sympathies for a “little while” destroyed; but God soon returned again to cheer the hopes of man with a promise; and man, thus graciously visited, looked up again towards God. The “seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head”—this was the first ray that darted into the gloom. Thus God showed himself propitious; but how is it with the angelic hosts who seem too to have blest the first pair with their presence in the garden in the golden times of paradisean innocence? They too had placed themselves at the gate in an attitude of frowning displeasure, forbidding them to return into their communion. This is another evidence that these holy beings stand in complete sympathy with God, for as soon as God was offended by sin, they were too. When God, however, again exhibited a gracious and merciful disposition towards unfortunate and sinful man, the angels too became once more his friends, and turned their holy sympathies towards him.

The returning sympathies of God and angels towards man, are beautifully pictured to us in the glorious vision which Jacob had at Bethel in the wilderness. What a vision was that! What a beautiful symbol of heaven and earth united; or, at least, seeking union with each other. God, at the top of the ladder, speaking promises; Jacob, at the bottom, hearing them with a spiritual ear; angels going up and down on it. This ladder represented to Jacob the new and living way back to the heavenly paradise, up which the church must ascend in its future history.

until it reaches the top of Mount Zion, on which stands the heavenly Jerusalem, where God dwells, and of which he is himself the light. Here Jacob could see, at the same time that he was receiving promises for himself and his seed, the steep path which they must ascend to realize them ; but also the comforting fact that this gradually ascending highway to heaven had God at the top looking down with interest, and was all along lined with angels, who should be to him and his posterity ministering spirits.

Jacob, there in the wilderness, and his vision, is evidently a type of Christ and the church. As he was travelling through the wilderness, so should Christ and the church ! The covenant there made between God and Jacob, was a covenant between God and his church. This covenant is consecrated, and shall stand like the pillar which Jacob set up, and the place where it stands shall be called Bethel—that is, the house of God — the church ! The Son of man, driven by our sins, as Jacob was driven by the wrath of Esau, shall leave his father's house, and make a journey through the wilderness of this sinful world. He shall at length, weary and exceeding sorrowful even unto death, light upon a certain place, where he shall sleep for a little while the sleep of death, but he shall rise again. Then he shall plant the true pillar of his church, and, pouring out the Spirit, anoint it with the Holy Ghost, of which the oil that Jacob put on the stone at Bethel is only a type ; and thus shall be completely fulfilled those “ greater things ” which the Saviour, in evident allusion to Jacob's vision, declared his disciples should see, “ Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the

angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

We love to think of those ancient times of quiet patriarchal life, and of those after ages of Jewish theocracy and of mysterious ceremonial solemnity, when God's voice was heard out of the awful cloud, and when angels walked on earth in every day life, and were the companions of men. We sometimes,—because past mercies, though smaller, are more appreciated than present ones, though greater,—wish a return of those palmy days of the world's childhood. Who has not in those still and thoughtful hours of life which God grants us so graciously, breathed forth his lament in the beautiful words of the Poet—

" Why come not spirits from the realms of glory,
 To visit the earth as in days of old—
 The times of ancient writ and sacred story ?
 Is heaven more distant ? or has earth grown cold ?

 Oft have I gazed when sunset clouds, receding,
 Waved like rich banners of a host gone by,
 To catch the gleam of some white pinion speeding
 Along the confines of the glowing sky.

 And oft when midnight stars in distant chillness
 Were calmly burning, listened late and long ;
 But nature's pulse beat on in solemn stillness,
 Bearing no echo of the seraph's song.

 To Bethlehem's air was their last anthem given
 When other stars before the One grew dim ?
 Was their last presence known in Peter's prison ?
 Or where exulting martyrs raised their hymn ?

 And are they all within the veil departed ?
 There gleams no wing along the empyrean now ;
 And many a tear from human eyes have started,
 Since angel touch has calmed a mortal brow."

This is a truly pathetic complaint, and one to which few hearts have not returned an ardent echo. But there is no need of making it. It is true, if we look for angels with our bodily eyes, or even with the eyes of a poet, we shall not see them. We shall not see the gleam of white pinions speeding along the confines of the glowing sky; we shall not hear their songs as the shepherds of Bethlehem heard them. Yet they have not all retired for ever behind the veil of the visible. They may still be seen and heard by the eye and ear of faith, though

“There gleams no wing along the empyrean now.”

It has been supposed by some, that since the Holy Spirit is on the earth as the comforter and guide of the saints, it would be a disparagement to Him if we believed still in the ministrations of angels. Hence it is said that with the passing away of the old Jewish economy, the ministry of angels came to a close; that we have a better ministry in the enlightening, leading, and comforting influences of the Spirit, and that consequently we have no need of angelic services. It is, however, no disparagement to the office of the Spirit to share in angelic sympathies and services, for their ministrations are of course under the Spirit's direction. The Saviour's work of redemption was not disparaged by having angelic services connected with it. These heavenly attendants are rather to be looked upon as a glorious train attending, to proclaim his dignity, and to swell his triumphs.

“These heavenly guards around him wait,
Like chariots that attend his state.”

So far, then, from being a disparagement, it is an honour; as it was with Christ, so it is in reference to the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this idea is condemned by facts. Angelic ministrations were enjoyed by saints after the gift of the Holy Ghost had been granted. Cornelius, Peter, Philip, Paul, John, and others of the disciples had angelic visits, and received blessings at their hands. To wicked Herod also an angel appeared, armed with judgments;—from such a visit may God protect us! In addition to this, it may be remarked, that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says, “*Are they not*”—not they *have* been—“ministering spirits?” It is not true, therefore, that the introduction of the Spirit’s dispensation was intended to shut out angelic sympathies from man.

It has, also, strangely enough, been imagined that in the new dispensation saints are angels to each other. In the old economy, because saints were few, and their path to heaven dark and obscure, it was necessary, it is said, that angels from above should come down to attend them; but now as the communion of saints is extended, and the path to heaven lies through the brighter fields of gospel light, it is no more necessary, that angels should come from the realms above, but saints are left to the sympathies of each other; and each one filled with more light and benevolence than the other becomes to him a ministering angel.

This theory is somewhat beautifully measured off in the following lines. I quote them gladly, not because they prove the theory which they seek to exhibit, but because they exhibit in beautiful language a beautiful truth. Saints *are* to each other angels in

a blessed sense,—though their services and sympathies no more shut out those of angels than the light of the moon is destroyed by the light of the stars which attend him and mingle their light with his, to lessen, if they cannot entirely disperse the earth's darkness. “No,” exclaims the poet with emphasis, against the idea that earth has no angels, because their wings are not seen, and their songs are not heard—

“No: earth has angels, though their forms are moulded,
But of such clay as fashions all below;
Though harps are wanting, and bright pinions folded,
We know them by the love-light on their brow.

I have seen angels by the sick one's pillow;
Theirs was the soft tone and the soundless tread,
When smitten hearts were drooping like the willow,
They stood ‘between the living and the dead.’

And if my sight, by earthly dimness hindered,
Beheld no hovering cherubim in air,
I doubted not — for spirits know their kindred —
They smiled upon the viewless watchers there.

There have been angels in the gloomy prison;
In crowded halls; by the lone widow's hearth;
And where they passed, the fallen have uprisen —
The giddy paused — the mourner's hope had birth.

I have seen one whose eloquence commanding,
Roused the rich echoes of the human breast;
The blandishments of wealth and ease notwithstanding,
That hope might reach the suffering and opprest.

And by his side there moved a form of beauty,
Strewing sweet flowers along his path of life,
And looking up with meek and love-blent duty:
I called her angel, but he called her wife.

O! many a spirit walks the world unheeded,
That, when its veil of sadness is laid down,
Shall soar aloft with pinions unimpeded,
And wear its glory like a starry crown."

Yes! this is all most sweetly true! Earth has ministering spirits in human form. They walk along the Babel of this world to comfort those disconsolate strangers who are weeping there under the willows. They walk not without balm in their hands through the world, and they apply it wherever they see wounds. At the bed of death they are, with soft tones and a soundless tread. In the huts, and at the hearths of widowed want and sorrow, and in the habitations of vice and ignorance the tread of their feet is no strange sound. The tender and faithful wife too, twining her mysterious self, like a green and flowery wreath, around every stern and rugged duty which rises in the path of her husband's life, may with a most thankful emphasis be called an angel. While we believe all this, we do not refuse to believe more, when God has warranted us to do so. While we are thankful for the communion of saints in Zion, we are also thankful for the "innumerable company of angels" to which we "are come;" and we hail them with joyful welcome, as ministering spirits to all who are heirs of salvation.

From the declaration of the Saviour to his disciples, that, "Hereafter they should see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," it is evident that it was not intended that angelic communications and sympathies, which were so abundant in the Jewish dispensation, should

cease at the introduction of the gospel dispensation, but rather that they should continue more free and frequent than before. Instead of heaven and earth receding from each other at the coming of Christ, they were brought more closely together. As substance is more real than shadow, so the New Testament church is more really in sympathy with heaven than the Jewish economy. As the soul, in a wakeful state, is more conscious than it is in dreams and visions, so is the sympathy between heaven and earth more wakeful and real now, than it was among the Jews. “If the ministration of death, written and graven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.”

We may ask, then, does this superior glory of the New Testament dispensation consist in this, that heaven and earth are farther apart in their sympathies, and communicate less with each other? Is the spiritual ladder empty, and is the lonely pilgrim, when lying like Jacob at the gate of heaven, no more visited by ministering spirits who go out and in there as in days of old? No: they are still the servants of the saints, and those who are come into the church as the

gate of heaven and the true Bethel, may there have fellowship with an innumerable company of angels.

There would be no difficulty in believing the ministry of angels, if they appeared in a visible manner as in former times; but, "where are they? we see them not;" is the faithless cry of such as have no eye to discern spiritual things, and no faith which is the evidence of things not seen. In this case, too, it may be replied, that we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; the things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal. The outward is always but the shell; the inward and hidden is the reality. That which is seen on earth is gross, and therefore perishing and transient. The gross manifestations of angelic beings under the old dispensation, like that dispensation itself, were destined to pass away to give place to that which was better—more spiritual.

That they do not now appear to us in visible bodies, is no evidence that they do not appear at all. If we suppose with some that they are in their nature pure spirits, and that they assumed bodies for the sake of convenience only, we can have no difficulty. If we suppose with others, which is the most probable opinion, that they are embodied spirits, there is just as little. "The vehicles or bodies* of angels, are doubt-

* This extract is from Dick's Future State. The following remarks by the same author, in opposition to the idea that angels are pure spirits, are in place here: "It will, doubtless, be objected, 'that these intelligences are *pure spirits*, and assume corporeal forms only on particular occasions.' This is an opi-

less of a much finer mould than the bodies of men; but, although they were at all times invisible through such organs of vision as we possess, it would form no proof that they are destitute of corporeal frames.

nion almost universally prevalent; but it is a mere assumption, destitute of any rational or scriptural argument to substantiate its truth. There is no passage in scripture, with which I am acquainted, that makes such an assertion. The passage in Psalm civ. 4, 'Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire,' has been frequently quoted for this purpose; but it has no reference to any opinion that may be formed on this point; as the passage should be rendered, 'Who maketh the winds his messengers, and a flaming fire his ministers.' Even although the passage were taken as it stands in our translation, and considered as referring to the angels, it would not prove that they are pure, immaterial substances; for, while they are designated *spirits*, which is equally applicable to *men*, as well as to angels—they are also said to be 'a flaming fire,' which is a *material* substance. This passage seems to have no particular reference to either opinion; but if considered as expressing the attributes of angels, its meaning plainly is, that they are endowed with *wonderful activity*,—that they move with the swiftness of the winds, and operate with the force and energy of flaming fire;—or, in other words, that He, in whose service they are, and who directs their movements, employs them with the strength of winds, and the rapidity of lightnings.

"In every instance in which angels have been sent on embassies to mankind, they have displayed *sensible* qualities. They exhibited a *definite form*, somewhat analogous to that of man, and *colour and splendour*, which were perceptible by the organs of vision—they emitted *sounds* which struck the organ of hearing—they produced the harmonies of *music*, and sung sublime sentiments, which were uttered in articulate words, that were distinctly heard and recognised by the persons to whom they were sent, Luke ii. 14—and they exerted their power over the sense of *feeling*. * * * In these instances,

The air we breathe is a *material* substance, yet it is *invisible*; and there are substances whose rarity is more than ten times greater than that of the air of our atmosphere. Hydrogen gas is more than twelve times lighter than common atmospheric air. If, therefore, an organized body were formed of a material substance similar to air, or to hydrogen gas, it would in general be invisible; but, in certain circumstances, might reflect the rays of light, and become visible, as certain of the lighter gaseous bodies are found to do. This is, in some measure, exemplified in the case of *animalculæ*, whose bodies are imperceptible to the naked eye, and yet are regularly organized material sub-

angels manifested themselves to men through the medium of three principal senses, by which we recognise the properties of material objects; and why, then, should we consider them as purely immaterial substances, having no connexion with the material universe? We have no knowledge of angels but from revelation: and all the descriptions it gives of these beings, lead us to conclude that they are connected with the world of matter, as well as with the world of mind, and are furnished with organical vehicles, composed of some refined material substances, suitable to their nature and employments.

“When Christ shall appear the second time, we are told that he is to come, not only in the glory of his Father, but also in ‘the glory of his holy angels,’ who will minister to him and increase the splendour of his appearance. Now, the glory which the angels will display, must be *visible*, and, consequently, *material*; otherwise it could not be contemplated by the assembled inhabitants of our world, and could present no glory or lustre to their view. An assemblage of purely spiritual beings, however numerous, and however exalted in point of intelligence, would be a mere inanity, in a scene intended to exhibit a *visible* display of the divine supremacy and grandeur.”

stances, endowed with all the functions requisite to life, motion, and enjoyment."

Whether, therefore, they are purely spiritual, or organized with refined bodies, or whether they are capable of both modes* of existence at pleasure, it throws no difficulties into the way of the belief that they dwell at times on earth, and communicate with men. The Saviour is no more on earth in a visible body, but he is, nevertheless, with us always even unto the end of the world. That the divine and heavenly manifestations under the old dispensation were gross, was because the state of the human mind, and the modes of society required it. The New is under the form, and in the element of the Spirit, and, consequently, deeper and more removed from all that is visible, gross, and tangible to the senses. The inward and spiritual consciousness, being now more awake, communications can be made without being so much recognised by the outward and sensual. Under the old dispensation, the Holy Spirit was not yet *in the world*, and consequently his communications had

* Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, has the following remarkable passage :

For spirits when they please
Can either sex assume, or both ; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure ;
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle thread of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh ; but in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their airy purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.

Par. Lost, Book I. lines 423—431.

to be *transmitted* to us; for this a sensual medium was needed; but now He is in the world, and in the saints, by his mysterious indwelling power, and, consequently, when he makes use of subordinate spirits, finding a spiritual basis in us, they need no more exhibit themselves to our senses in order to gain, through them, access to our spirits. For this reason it is no more necessary that angels, in order to communicate with us, should clothe themselves in visible bodies, and need also no organs of speech.

In confirmation of this, it may be remarked, that the manifestations of angels after the Holy Ghost was given, seem not to have been of a visible character. The angel that Cornelius saw, he saw "in a vision," and the communications he received of him must have been of a purely spiritual kind. Peter, in prison, though he was roused up and followed the angel, yet while he was following the angel out of prison, so little had his senses to do with it, that "he wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision." In Acts viii. 26, it is said that "the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip," commanding him to go in the direction where he would meet the Ethiopian eunuch, to give him instruction, and when he met him, "the Spirit said: Go near and join thyself to this chariot." Was this spirit the same as the angel? If so, does it not seem probable that his first speaking was also in a spiritual manner? It does not appear that Philip *saw* the angel. The angel which Paul saw during the storm on the sea, seems to have appeared to his spirit in a dream, when the senses were inactive; for he says, "There stood by me this

night the angel of God." The angel also which appeared to John on Patmos, appeared in a vision, while he was "in the Spirit." Even if this point could not be positively proven, and it should seem that there were visible appearances after the Holy Ghost was given, yet this consideration would not be invalidated; for the days of the apostles were the twilight period of transition, when they may have found it necessary yet to appear in a more sensible way. After the new dispensation was once fully introduced, it may no more have been necessary; there is no good proof, at any rate, that they appeared visibly after the apostolic age.

It is a mistaken notion that angels cannot communicate with our spirits in any other way than by presenting themselves visibly to our eyes, or tangibly to our touch, or speaking to us in an audible way through the medium of the air. We might urge the philosophic consideration that there may be even material media, of which neither of our five senses is conscious, which might constitute an element in which spiritual beings might commune with each other. But we need only go to scripture facts to prove that such communion has actually taken place. It has already been remarked, that the angels which appeared to Cornelius and to Peter did it "in a vision." They did not make use of their bodily organs or physical sensations, as a medium. It was a vision of the Spirit. Peter was asleep at the time, and consequently unconscious of the outward world through the senses, yet his spirit was capable of vision and of action too, under the operation of the angel. The angel raised him up,

spoke to him; Peter, according to the angel's directions, girded himself, bound on his sandals, cast his garment around him, and followed him, and yet he "wist not that it was true which was done by the angel" — that is, he was not conscious through his senses of the reality of all that was done, "but thought he saw a vision!" It was not until they had passed the first and second ward, and were come to the outer iron gate that led to the city, that "Peter was come to himself." Then, for the first time, he knew "of a surety" that God had sent his angel to deliver him. Here, then, we see that a human spirit can be moved to action by an angelic spirit, without the body being conscious of it.

The body is useful to communicate with the outer world, and for this it is the proper and indispensable medium; but its use can be dispensed with, when we "come to visions and revelations of the Lord." Paul was caught up into the third heaven, even into paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, and yet, whether in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell. It seems that in this case the spirit heard, and saw, and felt, "visions and revelations of the Lord," without the medium of bodily senses, or at least without their conscious use, which is all the same to the argument. If such communications were not possible, then the spirits of the saints would be in a lonely and forsaken condition, when separated at death from the body. Lonely would they pass through the dark valley of death, and lonely would they remain even in heaven, without the power to communicate with other spirits, until they receive their bodies in the resurrec-

tion. But we are encouraged to believe, from the dealings of the angels with the soul of Lazarus, the beggar, that our souls will not pass the shades of death alone, but will be conveyed in the sweet company of angels through death into Abraham's bosom. And from the vision of John in Patmos, it appears that angels and saints were, in his time, worshipping together in the most intimate fellowship around the throne in heaven.

What we have thus far seen as possible and probable—yea, and much more—in reference to angelic sympathy, we see by the light of God's word as real. The eye of faith roving through the pages of divine revelation, sees the angelic world living and moving on the earth, constantly descending from heaven to earth, and ascending from earth to heaven. Let us see still farther in what relation heaven and earth stand to each other, by seeing what is revealed in the Bible concerning angelic sympathy, and the mode and object of their presence on the earth. It is by seeing how they are serviceable to man, and what are their employments on the earth, that we shall be able to discern their footsteps. To do this aright, it is necessary that we put away cold, unbaptized philosophy, and put on simple, child-like faith. The declaration of the Saviour, when he touched the eyes of the blind man, is deeply and mysteriously true, "According to your faith, be it unto you!" "There are more things in heaven and earth," known to simple faith, than are dreamed of in skeptical philosophy. The same qualification which is necessary to be led into any truth, is also necessary to be led into the mysteries of the

hidden world: it is this: "In thy light shall we see light." "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." An inward sympathy with the mysterious and awful kingdom of spirits, is an indispensable qualification to him who would understand its constitution, and inquire into its operations. Faithless skepticism robs the soul of all its contents, and makes to it the world, physical and spiritual, empty and unreal; but faith is the "substance" of all those things for which the soul hopes, and the "*evidence*" of *things not seen!* He who would win truth, must woo it, he who would woo it, must love it, and he who would love it, must believe it, and be favourably disposed towards it.

Angels, according to scripture, are *intelligent* beings. The wise woman of Tekoah, in speaking of the wisdom of David, compares his wisdom, in the way of praise, to the wisdom of an angel: "My lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are on the earth." (2 Sam. xiv. 20.) The last clause of this passage implies that angels are well acquainted on the earth. "They are," says one, "intimately acquainted with the springs of life, and the avenues by which they may be interrupted; for an angel slew, in one night, one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrian army. They are perfectly acquainted with all the relations which subsist among mankind, and can distinguish the age and character of every individual throughout all the families of the earth; for one of these powerful beings recog-

nised all the first-born in the land of Egypt, distinguished the Egyptians from the children of Israel, and exerted his powers in their destruction. And as they are ‘ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation,’ they must have a clear perception of the persons and characters of those who are the objects of the divine favour, and to whom they are occasionally sent on embassies of mercy.”

Why should holy beings, for they are holy, not be intelligent? Their minds have never been enervated, debased, or clouded by sin. They have always lived, as their proper home, near the eternal throne, in those high and holy regions, where the radiance of the Supreme Wisdom shines continually upon them. In such pure and clear regions, should not their minds be pure and cloudless? Then, too, the development of their minds is not interrupted by death, but they have for thousands—perhaps many thousands of years, been expanding in knowledge. When we consider what a vast compass of knowledge some human spirits are able to embrace in a short life-time, we are overwhelmed with the calculation of what must be the capacity and the acquirements of angelic minds. “They dwell in a world where *truth* reigns triumphant, where moral evil has never entered, where substantial knowledge irradiates the mind of every inhabitant, where the mysteries which involve the character of the Eternal are continually disclosing, and where the plans of his providence are rapidly unfolded. They have ranged through the innumerable regions of the heavens, and visited distant worlds for thousands of years; they have beheld the unceasing

variety, and the endless multitude of the works of creation and providence, and are, doubtless, enabled to compare systems of worlds, with more accuracy and comprehension, than we are capable of surveying villages, cities, and provinces. Thus their original powers and capacities have been expanded, and their vigour and activity strengthened; and, consequently, in the progress of duration, their acquisitions of wisdom and knowledge must indefinitely surpass every thing that the mind of man can conceive."

Being thus intelligent, it is natural and reasonable to conclude that in ministering to us on the earth, they should bring their own intelligence into contact with our minds, and that thus the communion of their minds with ours should have on us a stimulating, quickening, and elevating effect. There is, even about the presence of intelligent minds among men, an element in which we cannot exist without feeling its elevating power. Though these, our intelligent associates, may not be directly and formally instructing us, yet we feel the enlightening and elevating power of their presence in indescribable ways. So our fellowship with angels in the enjoyment of their ministrations, has the same effect, though we should not be able to point out the precise way in which they instruct us, or be able to recognise and designate any particular light springing up in our minds as having been imparted by them.

That they have been engaged in communicating intelligence to men, is abundantly evident from the Bible. Their very name, which means a messenger or bearer of news, designates their office in this re-

spect. The intelligence that God would destroy Sodom, was communicated to Lot by two angels. They announced the coming of the Saviour, and of his forerunner, John the Baptist. To the Marys, who went early to the tomb to seek Jesus, they brought the information that he had risen. Even the law is said to have been "ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator," and Stephen says that the Jews received it by the "disposition of angels." The Revelations which John received on Patmos, in a vision of those things which must shortly come to pass, were "sent and signified" by an angel. Cornelius, who was a devout man, "and prayed to God always," received from an angel the comforting intelligence that his prayers were heard. "Thy prayers and thine alms," said the angel, "are come up as a memorial before God." Daniel also received notice in the same way that his prayer was heard; for the angel Gabriel, being caused to fly swiftly, reached him about the time of the evening incense, before his prayer was ended, clothed with authority to answer his prayer, and to assure him of his acceptance before God.

It is neither unreasonable nor unscriptural to believe that angels communicate with our minds and beget thoughts, or at least that they give such motion and tendency to the mind as will beget thoughts. If evil spirits can excite and allure our thought to evil, by making use of our indwelling depravity, why cannot good angels incite the Christian's mind to useful and holy thoughts, by making use of indwelling grace? That evil spirits do in this way operate on wicked hearts, is beyond a doubt; why should the

other not be equally credible? Wicked men cannot always distinguish between what is the motion of their own minds, and what is the effect of Satanic operations; why should this be required of saints in reference to the operations of God's angels on their minds? It is not, certainly, in the outward manifestations of the spirit's operations, but among the hidden springs of its activities, that the motions of angelic influence are to be sought. Our souls are also susceptible of being operated upon by human spirits, why not as well by angels? We communicate with this world through our bodily senses; by the medium of flesh, as in the case of touch, taste, smell; through the medium of air, as in the case of hearing; through the medium of light, as in seeing; but has the soul no senses which are not called into action in our communications with the outward world, which are capable of more refined communication? We know that there are media in the world more subtle and refined than any of those mentioned: may not our spirits through these hold communion with the spiritual intelligences of a higher order? Who, in observing the operations of his own mind, has not discovered that there are movements in it, which seem in no way to be dependent upon its association with the outer world? The history of mental phenomena furnishes abundant materials for evidence on this point, as, for instance, in cases of presentiments. There are well established cases, where the mind seems to have acquired a kind of prophetic capacity. This is the case especially with some quiet and lonely spirits, whose sympathies seem to have no affinity for those things, which, to

the majority of men, seem most real. This is also the case often with old persons, who, wandering in the evening twilight of life, manifest a certain kind of prophetic mysteriousness, which makes us quiet in their presence. Thus the popularity which the following sentiment of the poet has gained, shows how well known is this truth—

“ ‘Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.”

Reason does not forbid, on the contrary it encourages us to believe that angels are constantly around us on the earth, that the spirit is capable of hearing their mysterious whispers through the mortal veil, and that they stand with our spirits in constant sympathy and communion.

They, on account of their superior intelligence, know better than we the devices of those wicked spirits which surround us, and are engaged for our ruin. If they are ministering spirits, it seems certain that a great part of their ministering consists in communicating to us wisdom to carry out our warfare successfully against evil spirits. They point out to us the path in which our safety lies. Thus Joseph was warned by an angel in a dream to flee into Egypt with Mary and the holy child, because Herod was seeking to destroy it. When Herod was dead, and the danger was over, he was invited by the angel to return again into the land of Israel. They go before us and open the way in which the providence of God intends to lead us. When Abraham sent his servant into the land of his kindred to seek out a wife for his

son Isaac, he said, "God shall send his angel before thee." And so he did. And well did he open the way; for as fast as the servant went, so fast was every thing arranged as by an unseen hand. So also did the angel go before Peter when he brought him out of prison, and delivered him "out of the hands of Herod, and from all the expectations of the people of the Jews." Into such straits do Christians often come; when the future is dark, and their way is hedged in; then they need ministering spirits to open up their way, and set their feet in the path of safety and success. There are few Christians who cannot, in their experience, refer to times when circumstances of difficulty, where no way seemed possible, yielded mysteriously, and permitted them joyfully to pass on. It is God's pleasure that the way of his saints shall be prepared, and that their paths shall be made straight; but who is it but his angels, that fulfil his pleasure, do his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his word?

God, for wise purposes, suffers his people at times to get into circumstances of dark and terrible trial, such as that in which Abraham was, when he stood with uplifted hand before the altar to offer up his only son, the child of the promise. But as God delivered him by the voice of an angel, so he bids angels minister to us, under similar circumstances, still. Thus far, and no farther, he suffers the fiery trial to proceed: when he sees that it is enough, he sends an angel messenger to deliver us out of the furnace of fiery trial, and speak to us through him the comforting words which he spake to Abraham, "Now I know

that thou fearest God." It was an angel that delivered the three faithful witnesses, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, out of the fiery furnace; and it was an angel that shut the lions' mouth, that they should not hurt Daniel, when he was cast in among them. After the devil had spent the fulness of his tempting power upon the Saviour in the wilderness, "behold angels came and ministered unto him." In the garden of Gethsemane, when his exceeding sorrow had reached its acme, then "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."

Every Christian's experience will enable him to refer to instances in his own life, when circumstances seemed to have hedged him completely in, when he seemed to stand in such terrible trial and fearful conflict, that the very foundations beneath him seemed to tremble. In such circumstances he feels that he is in the power of an evil spirit, for his own disapproves of his position; yet is he borne on in the direction he would not go, by a power deeper, broader, stronger than himself. He sees the course which his destiny is about to take, and his wakeful spirit most bitterly disapproves of it; but he has no more power to deliver himself from the fatal downward current, than one who is in the draught of Niagara can deliver himself from its sweeping power. Suddenly the spell is broken!—but not by his own hand! Like a bird released from the power of the charming serpent into whose jaws it was about to fly, he escapes in freedom, looking back with trembling delight upon the danger from which he has escaped. You say God delivered him; and so he did; but he delivered him through

the ministry of angels; for this is their employment —are they not ministering spirits? They interest themselves in our salvation, as evil spirits do in our ruin; hence they rejoice in heaven over one sinner that repents. In their earnestness in our behalf, they press hard upon the confines of mortal life, and why not reach through with unseen hand to break the snare in which evil spirits have entangled us? why not whisper through the veil that separates us from them, which a moment may lift, to direct and animate us in the battle with sin and hell?

Angels are *animating* spirits. The enchanted ground which Bunyan represents as lying on the way to the celestial city, is real. Every Christian knows something of it from experience. Saints come, sometimes, “into a certain country, whose air naturally tends to make one drowsy.” Every duty becomes a burden, and the heart, weak as water, seems to have no strength to bear up, and he sinks into drowsiness and discouragement. In such a condition, not only duty, but often life itself, becomes a burden, which it seems sometimes impossible, sometimes foolish, to bear.

Under this drowsy influence Elijah was, when he fled from before the wrath of Jezebel. “He himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die: and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.” All was discouragement with him, and he had no heart to lay his hand to duty, or to take one step forward in the track, which God had laid out for him. Here a monitor is needed to give

him an animating whisper! “And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him.” Touched him! What a gentle admonition was that! “And said unto him, Arise and eat.” The prophet obeyed, but did not seem to understand the hint which the angel was thus giving him to arise, strengthen himself, and go on in the way of duty. So after he did eat and drink, he “laid him down again.” That was enchanted ground, where Elijah could say, in the language of the Pilgrim, “I begin to be very dull, and heavy to sleep: I do now grow so drowsy, that I can scarcely hold open mine eyes; let me lie down here and take one nap.” It was necessary that he should again be gently roused, and admonished to duty, and for this purpose the angel was still near him. “And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.” This second hint he seems to have understood: the words which the angel added, “because the journey is too great for thee,” conveyed to Elijah’s mind the angel’s meaning—that he should hasten on in the path of duty. So he arose and “went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God.”

How gentle are the footsteps of angels! How tender their touch! How soft their whispers! How courteous their hints to dull and weary pilgrims in the wilderness! Dull sense often fails to recognise their presence. God was at Bethel where Jacob slept, but he knew it not until he was fully awake; so if our spirits were not so drowsy, we would be more con-

scious of angelic ministrations. The touch of the angel would have been enough, if Elijah had been in proper spirits, to remind him of the fact, that one who had such a mission before him ought not to be sleeping in the juniper shade. But the prophet was drowsy, and his perceptions dull, so it required hint after hint before he understood it. The angel, however, does not leave him, until he has started him on towards Horeb. Equally slow to perceive the presence and hints of the angel was Peter in prison. Though the angel raised him up, took off his chains, and spoke to him—although he obeyed the angel's commands, girded himself, put on his sandals, cast his garment around him, and followed the angel out, yet “he wist not that it was true which was done *by the angel*; but thought he saw a vision.” How willing the spirit, how dull and weak the flesh! How often are we animated and roused up when we lie dozing and sleeping in the way of duty under the enchanted juniper shade! We think, after we are roused, that it was our own reflections which brought us to a sense of duty, and that it was our own resolution which broke the drowsy spell, and set us on anew in the path before us, when we ought to “know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel,” as he did to Peter in prison, and to Elijah in the juniper shade. Elijah did make use of his own reflections, but it was the hint of the angel that moved him to these reflections. The angel does not tell him plainly to journey, he only tells him that the journey *before him* is too great to be made without eating. Upon this hint of a “journey,” Elijah's reflections improved, till he saw his

duty; his own reflections evidently were more on sleeping than on journeying. And when he was once entered upon his way, it was rather "in the strength of that meat" which the angel gave him, than in the strength of his own resolution, that he reached Horeb, the mount of his destination! Thus angels do not only arouse the sleepers, but afterwards help them on in the way.

Why should we doubt this? Is not one saint capable of operating in this way on another, and why not an angel on a saint? We have seen in the case of Peter's deliverance from prison, that angels can operate on the mind without making use of our bodily senses, and without our being conscious of it through the senses. The fact that angelic revelations were made to the mind of Joseph *in a dream*, on four different occasions, proves the same fact. Why should we doubt that they can so communicate with our spirits still? If the notes of distant music wafted on the air to the ear can reach and melt the heart, and lift it from earth to heaven, as they often do, why cannot angelic whispers do the same? If the sighing of the evening zephyr can move the strings of the heart, and produce a concord of the tenderest and loveliest feelings, why cannot unseen angelic influence do what is thus done by

"The viewless spirit of a lovely sound?"

Yes, there is a music, like that of the spheres, which, though unheard by dull, mortal ears, is nevertheless the deepest harmony of the universe. There is an influence like the "sweet influence of the Pleiades," of

which Job speaks, which cannot be bound, but felt ; it is the sweet and blessed influence of the angelic ministry. If it be still asked by some that we would show them these spirits, that they may believe them to be on the earth, let such be reproved for their grossness by the language of the Saviour, “a spirit hath not flesh and bones !” Can we not as well believe in that which we feel, as in that which we see ? “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

Angels are the *executors* of God’s judgments and mercies. God sometimes punishes the wicked in *this* world. Wherever, therefore, the marks of his judgments are seen, there are seen the footsteps of angels that walk on earth. “He maketh his angels spirits ; his ministers a flaming fire.” Who could better execute his just judgments, and overcome the wrath of raging men, than his angels “that excel in strength ?” It makes no difference how mighty are the hosts of his enemies, his angels are sufficient to execute God’s judgments upon them. “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.” “And I beheld,” says John, “and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands !” These are always ready and near the place where they are needed. When the Saviour was taken, he says, “Thinkest thou that I cannot *now* pray to my Father, and he shall *presently* give me more than twelve legions (60,000) of angels ?” It was not necessary that some time should intervene during which, like the angel Gabriel, they should “fly swiftly” from heaven to earth, but just one word would

have started up angelic legions around the spot where he was. Thus, in the days of Scottish warfare, myriads of warriors lay concealed in the ravines, but one blast of the clan-pipe would start them up, and in a moment the hills were lined with determined faces and glittering swords. Thus was it also when the Syrian hosts arrayed themselves so mightily against Israel at Dothan. So great was the enemy's host, that the servant of Elisha cried out in discouragement and fear, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" But Elisha said, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that are with them." The young servant, however, was blind to the meaning of the prophet's declaration; so Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes, and let him see the secret army which should fight for Israel. So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and oh! what a vision! "He saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." These are God's hosts upon the earth, ready to be called up at any moment to do his pleasure.

That angels are employed in the earth to execute God's judgments upon his enemies, is abundantly evident from the Bible. The two angels that came to Sodom, said, "For *we* will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord *hath sent us to destroy it.*" An angel of the Lord smote Herod, "because he gave not God the glory." They make use of different instrumentalities to accomplish their purposes. In the case of Herod, it seems the angel touched him with a loathsome and horrid disease, so that he was eaten by

worms until he gave up the ghost. In the judgment which came on Israel in the time of David, an angel, by means of pestilence, smote seventy thousand men that died. When the Assyrian army under Sennacherib went up against Hezekiah and the city of David, by night, as the Assyrian hosts lay encamped, "the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred four score and five thousand: and in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

"Like the leaves of the forest, when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen :
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleeper waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still."

What instrument the angel used in this case is not known; perhaps, as the above lines suggest, some pestilential breath.

No doubt what one says "happened," and what another says was "providential," though it both happened and was providential, yet is directly to be referred to angelic ministrations. Angels are the executors of God's providence in the way of favours, as well as of judgments. The springing of a leak in a ship which sinks a hundred into a watery grave, the breaking of a limb which falls upon the passing traveller, and a thousand other events of daily occurrence around

us, called accidents, may be, and doubtless are, effected in the government of providence by angelic instrumentality. God gives them power over life, and when he wishes to call one away from the earth, he sends an angel to execute his purposes. The angel does it in a way that seems to us perfectly natural, and we do not therefore look for the track of an angel. When a wicked man is called away by what is called an accident, an angel smote him because he gave not God the glory, and that he may do no more evil in the world. Many a poor Balaam, who is suddenly stopped short in his journey of life, wonders what is the matter; but he need only lift up his eye to see the angel standing before him, with drawn sword, upon which is written, in letters of terrible fire, "THUS FAR AND NO FARTHER!" Like the ominous TEKEL upon the wall of Belshazzar's palace, the fingers which write, and the words which are written, are seen, but the one who writes stands in the shade! When it is a good man who is thus called away as by accident, then it was an angel which touched him, to call him away from some coming evil. Even in those cases where persons die in what is called a natural way, it doubtless is the angel of death who touches and puts out of place some spring of life, and thus sets the current of death in motion. And oh! what a soft touch will do it! Thus angels are always abroad in the earth, binding the tares in bundles to burn, and gathering home into eternal barns, God's fruitful sheaves.

If angels are God's agents to carry out his provi-

dences in the way now mentioned, then they have in charge, in a very especial way, God's people, to protect and attend them. The Jews believed that each saint had a good angel attending him constantly as his guardian. It has been supposed that the Saviour gives countenance to this idea, when he says, speaking of young and weak believers, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." See also Acts xii. 15, from which also an argument has been derived by some in favour of the Jewish theory of guardian angels. It has been well remarked, that it makes no difference whether each one has a guardian angel, when we know that each one has a *guard* of angels? "For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, says to those who entered the communion and fellowship of the New Testament, "Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels." This is the reason why they rejoice over every newly converted sinner, and why with such eagerness they desire to look into the mysteries of the church. Why then should we feel it a particular consolation to have **ONE** guardian angel, when we know that they are *all* ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation?

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." What a blessed truth is this! Could we only realize the fact by faith that wherever we set our tent in our wanderings as pilgrims in this wilderness, the angel of the Lord will throw his encampment around us!

“Not walls nor towers could guard so well
Old Salem’s happy ground ;
As those eternal arms of love,
Which every saint surround !”

He shall give his angels charge over us to keep us in all our ways ! In ALL our ways ! In this changing life we are led in many ways, but in all these his angels, which excel in strength, have charge to keep us. There is a way of temptation—there is a way of affliction—there is a way of prosperity and of adversity—there is a way of duty and of toil—there is a way that winds along among the sorrowing willows of life’s Babel—there is a way also, oh ! how checkered, that we know not—and there are a great many other ways which make up the Christian pilgrim’s path, for God leads him about, as he did Jacob of old, in a waste howling wilderness ; but in *all* these ways we are kept by his angels who have charge over us.

But ah ! there is one more way ; the—at least it seems so at a distance—gloomiest and loneliest of all ; it is that which lies through the valley of the shadow of death. In this way too angels will attend us. This is evident from the case of the beggar who died on the steps of the rich man’s door ; he “was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom.” We are told, also, that at the end of the world, Christ “shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” From this it is plain that angels are employed in gathering home the spirits of the saints. It was the opinion of the Jews, according to Josephus, that angels conducted

the souls of the dying from the gate of death on to the place of their final abode. When they pass the gate of death, there are two ways, one to the right, and the other to the left. "The unjust are dragged by force to the *left hand* by the angels allotted for punishment. The just are guided to the *right hand*, and are led with hymns, sung by the angels appointed over that place, into a region of light, in which the just have dwelt from the beginning of the world."

If heaven is a place distant from the earth, the departing spirit will need a guide to conduct it thither. Who are the guides of the saints in this untried way, if not those ministering spirits which have charge over them in all their ways? No wonder then that they are often seen hovering around, in the dying visions of the saints. Eager to receive the struggling spirit, they press through the veil, or lift it gently up to the dying Christian, and look from behind it upon him with smiles of winning welcome. There they are, unseen by those who stand weeping around the bed, but seen by him whose vision for spiritual things is becoming bright in proportion as it becomes dim to earth. No wonder that the dying saint is often seen to throw up his arms with unearthly energy, crying, in joyful triumph, "They come! they come!" Yes, they have come! The vision is no phantom of a reeling brain. It is real. It is the "chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof," waiting at the bed of death. They have come, the heavenly convoy! They have come! they have come!

Bright angels are from glory come
 They 're round his bed, they 're in his room :
 They wait to waft his spirit home —
 All is well — all is well !

Farewell, earth ! See they cleave the heavens ! “ Lift
 up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lifted up, ye
 everlasting doors ! ”

SECTION III.

SAINTLY SYMPATHY.

When once we close our eyes in death,
 And flesh and spirit sever :
 When earth and fatherland and home,
 With all their beauty sink in gloom —
 Say, will it be for ever ?

Will we, in heaven, no more review
 Those scenes from which we sever ?
 Or will our recollection leap
 O'er death's dark gulf, at times, to keep
 With earth acquaintance ever ?

In life we love the blessed past,
 It clings upon us ever :
 The songs of childhood and of home,
 Like music when the minstrel 's gone,
 Live in our hearts for ever !

The child 's included in the man,
 And part of him for ever ;—
 The Past still in the Future lives,
 And basis to its being gives,
 Not it, but of it, ever !

Will death completely and for ever shut from de-
 parted saints this present world ? Will sympathy

with it, and the remembrance of it perish from their minds? or will the home of their childhood, the paths of their wanderings, and all that they loved and lost on earth, be still remembered by them in heaven? Have the dead in Christ forgotten us? Do they think of us and love us no more? Are they interested in our behalf still as they were on earth? Do they know anything of our fortunes or misfortunes—are they, to any extent, aware of our joys and sorrows—do they sympathize with us in our temptations and triumphs—and are they sensible of our love to them?

Answers to these interesting questions will be attempted in this section, and may be gathered from the observations which are made on the following propositions. In this form, for the sake of order, we shall say what we can find, in reason and scripture, to say of saintly sympathy between heaven and earth.

1. WE HAVE COMMUNION WITH THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN. This communion is, of course, only between SAINTS on earth and saints in heaven. Between an unconverted soul on earth, and the spirit of a just one made perfect in heaven, there can be no sympathy. Between a saint and a sinner, even on earth, there is no spiritual communion. The fellowship which they enjoy with each other is grounded merely in flesh and nature; it can rise no higher, and, consequently, as these perish in death, the fellowship based on them must come to an end. “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” The answer is, most emphatically, none! “Indeed,” says the learned and pious Bishop Pierson, “the saint departed, before

his death, had some communion with the hypocrite, as hearing the word, professing the faith, receiving the sacraments together; which being in things only external, as they were common to them both, and all such external actions ceasing in the person dead, the hypocrite remaining loseth all communion with the saint departing, and the saints surviving cease also to have their farther fellowship with the hypocrite dying. But being the true and unfeigned holiness of God, not only remaineth, but also is improved, after death; being the correspondence of the internal holiness was the communion between their persons in their life, they cannot be said to be divided by death, which had no power over that sanctity by which they were first conjoined."

I BELIEVE IN THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS. This has been the voice of the church for many centuries. This voice comes to us through the quiet medium of by-gone ages, not in the upstart impulse and hurry of heated passion, but with ever-increasing strength and calmness, as the sober confession of the Christian consciousness. It is not a confession objectively seen and coldly proclaimed, but it is subjectively felt and uttered. It is not the language of youthful hope and longing, which trusts in, and rests upon, fancies; but it is the language of aged truthfulness and sagely experience. While, in the history of the church, many enthusiastic and superstitious dogmas have started up, lived an ephemeral life, and died away only to be revived and repeated with similar folly and disappointment in after ages, this article of our precious faith has lived in the church with uninterrupted power and consolation

through the deep floods and fierce flames of her trials and triumphs. The martyr at the stake, when about to be sundered from the visible fellowship of the church on earth; the pious monk in his deep solitude; the missionary, self-exiled for Christ's sake; the persecuted and banished, when strangers in a strange land—all repeated, in their darkest hours, and in their fiercest trials, with joyful unction, "I believe in the communion of saints!"

What so precious now as this article! We see the saints separated by difference in views, by party peculiarities, by distance in time and space, yea, and by the dark stream of death which separates earth from heaven,—yet we can rise by the mysterious power of faith above time and space, above feeling and thought, above prophecy, tongues, and knowledge, which must cease, above the distinction of earth and heaven, and realize consciously, in the element of eternal life, the communion of saints.

Let us see what the church means by the communion of saints, and how this article of our catholic undoubted Christian faith is derived from the sacred scriptures.

The particulars involved in the communion of saints are briefly but ably discussed and stated by Bishop Pierson in his exposition of the creed. After a critical and historical discussion of it, and after having fortified every point by reason, scripture, and the testimony of the church, he sums up the whole thus: "Every one may learn from hence what he is to understand by this part of the article, in which he professes to believe in the *communion of saints*; for

thereby he is conceived to express thus much: I am fully persuaded of this as of a necessary and infallible truth, that such persons as are truly sanctified in the church of Christ, while they live among the crooked generations of men, and struggle with all the miseries of this world, have fellowship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as dwelling with them, and taking up their habitations in them: that they partake of the care and kindness of the blessed angels, who take delight in ministrations for their benefit: that beside the external fellowship which they have in the word and sacraments with all the members of the church, they have an intimate union and conjunction with all the saints on earth as the living members of Christ: nor is this union separated by the death of any, but as Christ in whom they live is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, so have they fellowship with all the saints which from the death of Abel have ever departed in the true faith and fear of God, and now enjoy the presence of the Father, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. And thus I believe in THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS."

We have already, in a previous section, considered the subject of divine and angelic sympathy. It remains only now to consider that which pertains to saintly sympathy. Even here we need only consider, as proper to our present subject, that part of saintly communion which has reference to the sympathy of saints on earth with saints in heaven.

Our conceptions of this communion will be much conditioned by, and receive their complexion from, our ideas of the church, as its basis and medium. For

this reason, the article of the communion of saints, immediately follows the article of the church: "I believe in the holy catholic church: the communion of saints." It is idle to speak of communion between earth and heaven, if a medium cannot be found *in* which a living contact between the two is possible. Every other conception of the communion of saints is but the mockery of an indefinite, unsubstantial, and powerless dream. This sympathy can realize itself, not through the clouds, or more refined ether, but through the church, which unites heaven and earth with living power and fellowship.

If we consider the church merely as an organization for convenience' sake; or as a society built upon the Bible, as its charter or constitution; or as a collected crowd of all the saints; or as an invisible *nothing*,—our ideas of the union of these saints with each other and their mutual sympathies, will be correspondingly mechanical and superficial. How, upon such a basis of union, those in heaven and those on earth, can be really in sympathy with each other, cannot intelligently be conceived. If, however, we look upon the church as the living body of Christ, continued mystically but really in the world, our ideas of the communion of saints in heaven and earth, as members in this body, will be accordingly deep and real.

As the communion of saints is based in the church; and as the sympathy which it involves is only possible through her, as its medium, it is necessary that we get correct ideas of her nature before we can understand the nature of saintly sympathy in her between

heaven and earth. A few considerations will, it is believed, open this subject to the view of the reader.

The church is a divine and real constitution. By constitution, I do not mean a code of articles for the regulation of conduct, but a substantial organic existence. It is not an abstraction to think of, and reason about, but a fact to believe and rest in. It is just as much a really constituted entity as the world, the laws which bear animal and vegetable life, or the constitution of Christ's person. In short, think of any real thing in the real world, and the church is more real. The laws of attraction and repulsion, the centrifugal and centripetal forces, which pervade, sustain, and move the physical universe, are a constitution more emphatically real than the material globes themselves, which they sustain, move, and direct; so, the church, pervading all space and time, bearing in her bosom the truth, the spirit, and all the resources of divine life, is more deeply and gloriously real than all the visible effects which she is seen to produce in the world. Her visible effects are only an evidence of her real constitution, by and from which these effects are produced.

This conception of the church receives abundant confirmation from scripture. The Jewish church itself, which was only a shadow of good things to come, was a constitution not dependent for its existence on individual faith, but had power to produce it. The Jews were not to believe and become pious elsewhere, and then come and attach themselves to the altar, but they were taught to go to the altar as being the channel of gracious efficacy to make them pious. They were not taught to *put* efficacy into the

service of the altar, by their own faith, but they were to approach it to *get* gracious virtue from it for the purposes of faith and salvation.

Such was the church proclaimed to be by its shadow. In the New Testament, where we have its substance, it is called the body of Christ. (Eph. i. 23.) As his body was a real constitution, so is the church. As the head is over the body, so Christ is head of the church, and head over all things to the church. That is, on the one hand all her resources are from him, as the members are supplied from the body; and on the other hand, the kingdoms of nature, providence and grace, are all governed by him in reference to the church, and for her sake. In her all these end, and find their meaning and accomplishment. The constitution of the body is before the members, if not in point of time, yet in regard to order. The members are in the body as their basis or ground. It is not the members that constitute the body, but the body as a previous generic constitution produces the members. So the church is first, and then her members. An assembly of members cannot make the church, but the church makes them,—is the basis and ground of their spiritual life, as livingly united to Christ her head. “The body is *one*, and *hath* many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so, also, is Christ.” (1 Cor. xii.) Christ’s body, the church, is *one*—a constitution having organic unity, in which, by which, and out of which, the members of that body are produced. This same idea of the church the apostle gives us when he calls her “the mother of us all.” (Gal. iv. 26.) It

would be worse than silly to speak of children as being before their mother, and as constituting her. Just so improper is it to speak of the church as being constituted by individual believers. Rather “of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her.” Yes, in her are the fountains of life, streaming into all her members, as the veins of the body pervade its members. Beyond the reach of her beating pulse, and outside of her warm embraces, there is neither life, communion, nor consolation.

Egypt and Tyre, and Greek and Jew,
Shall *there* begin their lives anew:
Angels and men shall join to sing
The hill where living waters spring.

When God makes up his last account
Of natives in his holy Mount,
‘T will be an honour to appear
As one *new-born and nourished there!*

We are told in Eph. ii., that those who had been afar off have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ, so that they are of the household of faith — that is, members of his church. Now, how was this done? “They are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In whom—that is in Christ—all the building—that is, the church, his body—fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit.”

The church also, according to Paul, is the “pillar and ground of the truth.” (1 Tim. iii. 15.) This

declaration is directly reversed by those who deny the real organic constitution of the church as now presented. According to their theory, the truth is the pillar and ground of the church. They say the truth works faith by the Spirit, faith makes Christians, Christians unite, and thus the church is formed as a result of faith, not as the cause of it. But this idea is false; according to Paul, the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, and consequently, also of faith and salvation. Its *ground*—for it is Christ's mystical body, and he was the truth; the church is his presence in the world in the form of truth and life. Its *pillar*—for it is in and by the church that the truth is sustained, preserved, perpetuated, and unfolded to men for the use of faith and eternal life.

In perfect consistency, too, with this conception of the church, the ministerial power received in ordination is represented as coming not from the collected faith of believers, but from another source. Paul was an apostle, "not of men, neither by man," but "by Jesus Christ," (Gal. i. 1.) It was Jesus Christ, and not the saints, that "counted him worthy," and that put "him into the ministry." (1 Tim. i. 12.) Paul left Titus in Crete, that he might "set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city," (Tit. i. 5.) Timothy also is exhorted to use the *gift* which was given him by the laying on of hands. (1 Tim. iv. 4.) This gift was evidently the authority and grace to minister; this gift he received, not from the saints, but it was a gift from the church, given by prophetic unction through the laying on of presbyterial hands. Ministerial power and grace was *for* the

people, not *from* them. It is still felt, and properly so, that ordination is not mere designation, but that it is a solemn investment of the ministerial power and grace, which constitutes the person ordained a functionary of the church. Who would be baptized and receive the communion at the hand of one who had not been ordained by such as had received ordination themselves, although the consent of a thousand believers had called and designated him to the ministerial office? Why is this so, if the church is not beneath and before all private faith a constitution towards which all look for help, and grace? "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Eph. v. 32.

I have been thus particular on this subject in order that we may have clear and scriptural ideas of the church as Christ's body, of the relations of the members to the body, and of their consequent communion with each other. Thus, then, we have Christ the divine head, the church his body, the saints his members, all mystically united in the power of a common life. Is this so? and shall there be no living sympathy between all the members of this mysterious body? Verily there will: and this sympathy will not consist merely in outward nearness, and not even in an interchange of thought and feeling in the way of communication, but it will be the joy-giving tremor of Christ's divine heart, beating out into the hearts of all his saints, uniting them to him, and to each other, and filling them with his own fulness, of which they all receive. John i. 16.

That such an inward mysterious basis for true

saintly fellowship and sympathy is needed, is well illustrated thus: "There is a story told of a man, who, wishing to keep bees, set himself to catch as many as he could among the flowers, and then shut them up together in a hive. None can deny but that they precisely resembled one another in appearance and nature; there was similarity, but yet, notwithstanding, there was no bond of unity existing among them; they were not a stock." Thus, in a hive of bees, it is not the number thus brought together, nor their outward similarity that makes them one swarm or kingdom, but it is their mysterious union in one head or king, which makes them live together in the most delightful harmony, and which makes them work together for the same object, and with a greater interest for the body as a whole, than for each one separately. Wherever they are scattered abroad, traversing fields, or buried in flowers, they are still one, by a deep sympathetic necessity, which we cannot understand and explain, but which we must believe and admire, and which we know they consciously feel. So in the communion of saints — there is a mysterious power which dwells first in the Head, and from him in each member, pervading and binding all as one mystical life.

We are but several parts
Of the same broken bread;
One body hath its several limbs,
But Jesus is the head.

If there were no deeper basis for the communion of saints than an interchange of thought and feeling in the way of common social reciprocation, this com-

munion would have to be confined to this world ; there could be none between the church militant and the church triumphant. More than this, it would have to be dependent on time and space ; it could not embrace the saints who lived in past ages, nor even those who now live separated from us by earthly distance. This would be a communion with some saints, but not **THE** communion of saints—that is, one communion of all saints. The union, however, which we enjoy with Christ as the living head of the church, and with all saints as living members of his mystical body, forms a basis for saintly communion which is independent of time and space, which consequently takes in the saints of all time, which extends over and across the grave, and embraces the whole family of Christ in earth and in heaven. “Indeed,” says Bishop Pierson, “*the communion of saints* in the church of Christ with those which are departed, is demonstrated by their communion with the saints alive. For if I have communion with a saint of God, as such, while he liveth here, I must still have communion with him when he is departed hence; because the foundation of that communion cannot be removed by death. The mystical union between Christ and his church, the spiritual conjunction of the members to the head, is the true foundation of that communion which one member had with another, all the members living and increasing by the same influence which they receive from him. But death, which is nothing else but the separation of the soul from the body, maketh no separation in the mystical union, no breach of the spiritual conjunction ; and, consequently, there must

continue the same communion, because there remaineth the same foundation." This is conclusive.

The well-known passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, teaches the communion of saints in the way now exhibited. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." This language is evidently too strong to be confined, as some have done, to the church on earth. The heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect—these are expressions which plainly refer to the heavenly country. To it, the apostle says, YE ARE COME. These saints, to whom he writes, were then still on earth, but such is the oneness and inward sympathy between the church on earth and heaven, that he who enters the fold on earth in faith, and by the power of a divine life, has entered, in fact, the fellowship of angels and of all saints. This social economy to which they are said to have come, is also called, in the 28th verse, "a kingdom which cannot be moved," which plainly determines the passage to have reference to the heavenly church and kingdom. The exhortation to brotherly love, which follows as the conclusion of the epistle, also adds testimony that the apostle in this passage speaks of the communion of saints. What

could be more natural, and more in place, than that, after he had told them of the fellowship into which their profession had introduced them, he should exhort them to see that brotherly love continue among them; for this would be a practical exhibition of this communion on earth, and a preparation for its future, final, and complete consummation in heaven.

“This *communion of the saints* in heaven and earth,” to quote once more from Bishop Pierson, “upon the mystical union of Christ their head, being fundamental and internal, what acts or external operations it produceth, is not so certain. That we communicate with them in hope of that happiness, which they actually enjoy, is evident; that we have the Spirit of God given us as an earnest, and so a part of their felicity, is certain. But what they do in heaven in relation to us particularly considered, or what we ought to perform, in reference to them in heaven, besides a reverential respect and study of imitation, is not revealed unto us in the scriptures, nor can be concluded by necessary deduction from any principles of Christianity. They which first found this part of the article in the *Creed*, and delivered their exposition unto us, have made no greater enlargement of this communion, as to the saints of heaven, than the society of hope, esteem, and imitation on our side, of desires and supplications on their side.”

It is true that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to define the nature of this communion, and the mode of its manifestations. The fact, however, that we are not able to define it for the understanding, is no reason why we should not make it a matter of faith, and

thus feel its power, and enjoy its consolations. We may feel heat even when we do not see light. We know that food strengthens us, though we may know nothing of the nature and process of assimilation by which the food received into the body comes in contact with the springs of life to replenish them. There is an unseen, as well as a seen world. Things which are true and eternal are all unseen—have their ground in a mysterious power, which lies behind the sensual world, and are therefore the only proper objects of faith. That which we know and understand, is an object of knowledge, but cannot be of faith. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

The ancient church cultivated, with lonely delight, and with pious diligence, the memory of their dead. To them, “sweet was the savour of their names.” They longed after them as beloved ones who had gone on a journey, and whom they expected again to meet. Their separation from them locally by death, seemed only to make them more conscious of the existence of a deeper tie, by which they felt that they were bound to them. It was a want of their spirits, and that want had been made greater by their having become Christians, that their beloved dead should not be separated in spirit from them. Would Christianity increase this want only cruelly to disappoint it? This they did not, and could not believe. Their language was: “We who live in hope, we who believe in God and trust that Christ suffered for us and rose again, we who abide in Christ, and rise again by Him and in Him, why should we *ourselves* be unwilling to depart

from out of the world, or why should we lament and sorrow for *those among us who are departed?* Christ himself, our Lord and God, exhorts us, and He says: 'I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never see death!' Why hasten we not to see our country, to salute our parents? There a vast multitude of them that are dear to us, await our arrival, a multitude of parents, brethren, and children, who are now secure of their own salvation, *and anxious only about ours.* What a mutual joy will it be for them and us, when we come into their presence and receive their embrace!"*

"From this turn of mind," remarks Dr. Neander on this passage, "the Christian custom arose, that the remembrance of the dead should be celebrated on the *anniversary of their death* by their relations, husband or wife, in a manner suited to the nature of the Christian faith and hope. The supper of the Lord was celebrated on this day, in the consciousness of an inseparable communion with those who died in the Lord; a gift was brought to the altar in their name, as if they were still living members of the church; and it was hence, probably, that the prayer for peace to the souls of the departed was interwoven with the prayer of the church, preceding the communion.

"As individual Christians and Christian families celebrated in this manner the remembrance of their near relations, *whole churches* also celebrated the re-

* Cyprian, quoted by Neander.

embrance of *those* who had died in the midst of them as witnesses of the faith: the day of their death was looked upon as their birth-day, the day of their birth into a glorified existence. The remains of their bodies were carefully buried, as the holy organs of holy souls, which should hereafter come again into their service, when called into another more glorious form. There was a congregation formed round their graves on the anniversary of their *birth-day*,) in the sense above mentioned,) and the story of their confession of the faith and of their sufferings was told, the Lord's supper was celebrated, in the conviction of a continued communion with them in union with Him, of whom they had given witness by their death!"

This extract shows what was the feeling of the ancient church, in reference to communion, and sympathy with the saints departed. That this feeling afterwards degenerated into papal superstition, such as prayers for the dead, and undue reverence towards them amounting almost to worship, is no proof that the feeling itself is not a proper one. These errors themselves serve rather to point us to the truth out of which they sprung, and from which they have degenerated. All the comforts which are, in various places and in various ways in the Scripture, given to the bereaved saints on earth in reference to their pious dead, proclaim this communion and sympathy in which they still stand to them. It is this sympathy which, like a golden cord of love, draws us sorrowing after them when they die, and which yields us a kind of melancholy pleasure, when we linger near their graves. It is the consciousness of this sympathy

which strengthens the mourner to bear the loneliness of life, in the sure prospect of a happy and eternal reunion in heaven, while he sings,

Yet again we hope to meet thee,
When the day of life is fled ;
There in heaven with joy to greet thee,
Where no farewell tear is shed.

Though, as already said, we cannot particularize and say exactly what is the nature of this sympathy, how far we can be sensible of it, and what are its manifestations, yet some additional considerations may increase our light, and aid in giving more definiteness to our thoughts and firmness to our feelings, in reference to this interesting subject. We pass, then, to another proposition.

II. THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN REMEMBER THIS WORLD, AND THINK OF US.

If the first part of this proposition can be shown to be true, the truth of the second will follow as a legitimate inference. It cannot be supposed, if they remember this world, that they do not think of us.

That we shall remember this world in heaven is evident from the intimate and necessary connexion of our being in this and the future life. This and the future life stand evidently in close and living relation to each other. Like cause and effect ; like premises and conclusion ; like life and action ; yea, like childhood and old age. The future life is a living continuation of this. So close is this connexion, that whatsoever a man soweth in this life, that shall he reap in the other. The very character of our souls is formed

by the various impressions received in the past. These impressions live in us, and are part of our being; we can no more be severed from them and from their connexions and sources in this world, than we can be severed from our own life. They are part of it.

The child's included in the man,
And part of him for ever;—
The Past still in the Future lives,
And basis to its being gives,
Not it, but of it, ever.

Separate a man, if it were possible, from his childhood and early life, take away all that the spirit has brought from thence, and he will no more be the same being, but a monster. The spirit must have the roots—springs—of its life in the past. It must live in the past by recollection and association, as necessarily as it lives in the present by consciousness, and in the future by hope. What the spirit has enjoyed or endured in the past, and especially what has made an impression on it, is called up, and drawn after it, as by a constant resurrection power. Even in dreams, when the body is forgotten, the spirit roams backward, and employs itself in calling up past scenes, and living them over again. In the past, it acts, enjoys, suffers, hates, and loves. Any event without its history is monstrous, a riddle, and an astonishment; to understand it, we must know its connexion with the past. Then, all is intelligible. So the spirit, in the future world, as well as in this, must stand in living union with the past.

If, at the transit of death, all recollection of the past were blotted out, we would stand on the eternal

shore as a new creation, rather than as a being that had a previous life and history, and that had just entered upon another stage of being. If this world is the soul's probation, and the future world its reward, then the soul must see the reason of that reward, and this it can only see by a review and recollection of its probationary state. There is no meaning to me in a crown, when I know of no victory won ; no meaning in a recompense when memory tells me of no services ; no meaning in gratitude when I remember no grace.

“ Some suppose,” says Stilling, “ a certain kind of continuance of their thinking faculties after death, but do not believe that with these faculties they will remember their earthly existence. They dream of an existence that is entirely new, which is better than the present, but upon which this life has no influence, and with which it has no connexion. This whole idea amounts to just the same as entire annihilation at death ; for if I cannot recollect this life—its fortunes and misfortunes, my wife and children, my friends, my weaknesses and my good deeds,—in short, nothing at all, then I am no more the same *I*, no more the same person, but I will be a being entirely new ! The Lord in mercy preserve us from such a future state ! But thanks to his name for ever, that the Bible, and the common sense and feeling of men in all ages and in all places, teach directly the contrary.”

We have a strong presumptive proof that saints in heaven remember the earth, from the fact that the rich man in hell did. When he called out of torment

upon father Abraham for mercy, he was requested to "remember" that he *in his life-time* had received his good things, and likewise Lazarus, evil things. Besides, we are told that the rich man remembered his five brethren, who were then still upon the earth. He remembered also, that they were in danger, and hence his concern for them. He must, therefore, have remembered their characters, their conduct, their wickedness, and consequently, their exposedness to God's displeasure. This involved particulars. Indeed, there is reason to believe that memory in the future world becomes keener and more faithful than ever it is here. We sometimes see that wicked men, in their dying moments, when the soul has almost asserted its independence of the body, have their memory exercised with great vividness. The mind seems to acquire a fearful capacity at that hour; memory, like a sun-glass which gathers the sun's rays into one point, gathers the deeds of a long life into one moment, and throws them with burning fury upon the guilty spirit. This may be but a horrid prophecy of what the spirit will be capable of, when once it is in the midst of those scenes of black and eternal despair which it now only dreads at a distance.

That the saints departed remember the earth is evident from scripture. Let the reader refer to Matt. xxv. 34, et seq. There the Judge, after having pronounced them blessed, reminds the righteous on his right hand, of the deeds of love which they had performed towards him on the earth. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me

in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” The righteous, not recollecting that they had ever done these things *to him* on the earth, inquire when this was done. Some, perhaps, had not been on the earth when he was, and could not, therefore, have ministered unto him. Then, when they are inquiring with holy wonder, he points them to those saints standing by, and says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of *these* my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” These deeds of charity had been done upon the earth, and how could they be reminded of deeds done on the earth, if all memory of the earth were blotted out at death? Not only must they have remembered the earth, but the intercourse which they there had had with these fellow saints; else there would be no propriety in this reference.

In the very nature of the judgment transactions, a reference to this state and abode of probation is necessary. The judgment is always represented as a transaction in which the reason of the reward of the righteous, and the reason of the condemnation of the wicked, shall be made known to the consciousness of the persons to be judged. Their lives of probation, their privileges, and their abuse of them, must all pass in such graphic review before the wicked in that day, as to constrain them to acquiesce fully in the final decision of their state — “that every mouth may be stopped, and that all the world may stand guilty before God;” and that the condemned sinner himself may stand “speechless,” making mute acknowledgment that the sentence is righteous. In the case of

the righteous, for some reason, no doubt to increase their happiness, a similar review is necessary, as is clearly to be seen from the above passage.

It seems not only that the earth is remembered in a general way, but that this review and recollection will extend to particulars. The remembrance of the earth and this life must be as particular as the judgment itself—descending, in the case of the lost, to every idle word which was spoken, and in the case of the righteous, to the giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. How could we give an account of our stewardship, if we did not remember the particular connexions and relations in which we stood upon the earth? How could the pastor give account of his ministry; and how could he bring his sheaves with him, if all memory of the reaping field were lost? True, the righteous might be rewarded, and the wicked punished, without any reason but that which existed in the mind of God; but how then could they feel it to be either to the praise of his glorious grace, or to the glory of his justice? Paul, as a faithful minister, expected to rejoice in heaven, in the sheaves of his ministry, “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.” How could he do this without remembering the toils of his ministry among these converts at Thessalonica, whom he would meet in heaven, to present them before his Father’s throne with exceeding joy. John, in his vision on Patmos, saw in heaven, “under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” These remembered the earth, for “they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true,

dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them which dwell on the earth?" (Rev. vi. 9, 10.)

The song of redemption which the glorified saints sing, shews that the departed remember the earth: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Rev. v. 9. Here they remembered that *he was slain*; they remembered also, the kindred, tongue, people, and nation, out of which they had been redeemed. In like manner, also, must they remember the horrible pit and the miry clay out of which they had been taken, as well as the blood shed, by which they were washed. Yes, as long as they see before them in heaven the Lamb which had been slain, their adorable Jesus, so long will they remember the earth which was the scene of his sufferings and of his triumphs. Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Olivet, and Calvary, will rise in grateful remembrance before the saints for ever. While memory, in the hours of heavenly quiet, retires to these sacred retreats upon the earth, their hearts will swell in deeper gratitude, and their tongues will speak a louder praise.

III. THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN KNOW MORE OF US THAN WE DO OF THEM.—That we know nothing directly of them, is no evidence that they know nothing directly of us. They, having been raised higher, possess capacities which we do not. The intelligent naturalist looks down upon the lower orders of living beings, sees their movements, and understands their habits, though they know nothing of him.

That the saints do thus look down upon us, seems to be evident from Heb. xii. 1; where the ancient saints are represented as surrounding us, and bending over us with intense interest, like the spectators did at the Olympian games, over those who strove for masteries. “Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” Now, this cloud of witnesses is evidently the Old Testament saints, of whose faith he spoke in the preceding chapter. In what way does he mean that these saints surrounded those to whom he wrote as witnesses? It may be taken in two ways. He either meant that they were surrounded by the examples of these saints, which should animate them, or, that they did actually from heaven look down with interest upon their struggles. When we keep in mind the apostle’s reference to the games, we will be forced to take his meaning in the latter sense. The allusion evidently presents them around us, not as *examples*, but as *spectators*.

The saints in heaven are in constant communion with angels. These angels are ministering spirits to us, and are, consequently, well acquainted with our condition and circumstances. It seems scarcely possible that they should not communicate to the saints intelligence in reference to their friends in Christ upon the earth. The more certainly must we be convinced of this when we consider—of which there can be no doubt—that the saints departed feel a deep in-

terest in their friends on earth. Such an interest could not exist without expressing itself in an anxiety to hear from those who are still entangled in the temptations and dangers of a probationary life. Their benevolence and affection toward us would not admit of such indifference. Having escaped the perils of the world themselves, they look back with inextinguishable longing to draw us after them. Every returning messenger of the angelic ministry brings news, which they no doubt hear with the same eagerness with which we hear news from a far country, in reference to interests which lie near our hearts.

In this benevolent and affectionate concern a great part of their happiness may consist. It is happiness both to love and to sympathize, and if this love and sympathy be pure, it is a joy fit to fill the hearts of the just made perfect in heaven. Inasmuch as they themselves, as that part of the church which is above, are not perfect without us, (Heb. xi. 40,) our struggles are their own. And as it is in this world a great source of happiness to the saints to concern themselves in the welfare of other saints—and as the members of that part of the church which is most advanced, are anxious to make themselves acquainted with that part which is still more in the wilderness, that they may extend to them their sympathy, so the church above is happy in knowing our wants and our triumphs. If this would be a source of happiness to the saints, will it be denied them in that world where all their wants are to be supplied?

That part of the body which is healthy and whole, knows the members that are labouring under imper-

fection and pain; though the members in pain may be so benumbed that they do not feel sensibly their connexion with the better part of the body. We, on earth, being dull and weary under the stupefying effects of sin, and remaining imperfection, are not aware, consciously, of the streams of life and love which flow towards us from the members which are in heaven, and yet the vigour of their life and sympathies received from Christ the head, is constantly flowing into our wounds and members; their sympathy with us is life-transmitting and supremely animating.

IV. THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN LOVE US AND ARE INTERESTED IN US. That they love us is evident from the nature of pure love itself. It is in its nature undying, and cannot be interrupted. "Charity never faileth." Love that has its ground in passion or self-interest, as is the case with much of earthly love, will die, whenever the basis upon which it rests is removed: this is the case, sometimes before, but always at death. As soon as the end which it was made to subserve is gained, it is no more useful, and like every other instrument which has done its work, it is cast away. But it is not so with that divine charity which binds the hearts of saints. Love to Christ and union with him is its basis, and as that abides for ever, so will it abide.

We sometimes see affection which is not founded in grace present something of an imperishable character, but still it is of the earth, earthly, and must, in due time, share the fate of all that passeth away. It is not so, however, with that love which may seem to a

superficial eye less ardent, if it has its source in grace. This is infinitely higher. The Saviour declares plainly that the love which unites his members to him, and consequently to each other, is more imperishable than the nearest of earthly ties. Hence he says that they can lay no claim to union with him who love father or mother, more than him. Matth. x. 37. All these ties, though not destroyed in him, are nevertheless perishable out of him, but in him complete and eternal.

It is of this divine love that Solomon says: “Love is strong as death ; jealousy is cruel as the grave : the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the flood drown it : if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.” As this love “beareth all things, endureth all things,” it will not suffer hurt by the desolation and wreck of death ; it will live on with undisturbed vigour, freshness, and beauty, in the midst of decay. Why should the elevation of the spirit at death, into a higher, clearer, and purer world, destroy it ? Rather it will thereby be refined, perfected, and strengthened, still clinging with increasing tenderness to its object. Thus, of those saints who lived, loved, and struggled together, though one depart beyond the veil before the other, the cord which unites them is not broken. Like Saul and Jonathan, lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death not divided. We cannot endure the thought that they do not love us. Brutish hearts may be satisfied with the idea that the hearts of their dead are the same to them as a stone, but

this is not tolerable to a heart which the Holy Ghost has refined and taught to love. Just as much as we desire that they shall live hereafter, so much do we also desire that they should love us.

If we consider it as established that the departed saints love us, we shall find no difficulty in believing that they are interested in us. That they are interested in us ought not to be doubted. We desire that they should, with such a strength of feeling that almost refuses to be denied. The idea that they care not for us is unnatural, violent, and shocking to our heart, especially in the tender hours of fresh bereavement and sorrow. In proportion as our feelings are piously cultivated does this desire increase. If a desire after immortality is considered a proof of it, why is not this desire to share the continued interest of the departed a proof that we do share them? When we read of the interest which the rich man in hell manifested for his five brethren, we have assurance that the saints in heaven are not less benevolent and tender!. Our dear sainted friends, therefore, are still bound to us by an internal tie. The lively consciousness of this fact is not the smallest of those influences which, like an irresistible current, are steadily bearing us on towards the better land.

I feel them with their rustling pinions sweeping
The damp dew gathered on my brow:
I see them in their lonely vigils keeping
Their midnight watch beside me now.
I know that chainless spirits in their love,
Are gazing on me from their homes above.

J. L. CHESTER.

In the Revelation we are told, that “the Spirit and the bride say, Come.” The bride is the church, part of which is in heaven. Those, then, who are in the triumphant church say, Come. Just as the Spirit is interested in us, and woos us continually from evil ways, and from earth, whispering, Come, so does also the bride. Her voice, like the voice of the Spirit, is a “still small voice,” but the ear of faith hears it, and the heart, powerfully animated by the hope of heavenly reunion, obeys her voice with the sweetest delight.

That the saints departed are interested in us, was fondly believed by the ancient church. This they intended should be included in their faith when they said, “I believe in the communion of saints.” Cyprian said to his church at Carthage, when he was comforting and animating them on the occasion of the death of their brethren by pestilence, “Why hasten we not to see our country, to salute our parents? There, a vast multitude of them that are dear to us, await our arrival: a multitude of parents, brethren and children, who are now secure in their own salvation, and anxious only about ours.” The passage, Heb. xii. 1, also affords proof that we share in saintly sympathies. If this be so, it is right to feel much submissive sorrow and tender love for the pious dead. It serves as a chain to draw us after. It is true the Saviour ought to be to us the chief source of heavenly attraction, and his interest the chief source of animation; but, in our weakness, is he? He is merciful even to our infirmities; and hence will not be displeased, when we make his saints, whom he loves as we do, a prominent object to

guide and strengthen our upward longings. Besides, the saints, as members of his body, cannot in our minds and hearts be separated from him, and form therefore, properly, a part of the heavenly attraction. The loved and lost on earth, are emphatically our treasures in heaven; and where our treasures are, there will our hearts be.

I have enlarged somewhat on the subject of sympathy with the unseen world, for the purpose of breaking up, to some extent, that cold barrier which a rationalistic age and philosophy have erected between the two worlds. The common feeling on this subject, I feel convinced, is better than the chilling abstractions of the schools. The common feeling still lingers with awe, reverence, and adoration, on the awful border of the spirit-world, in its loneliest, soberest, and loveliest hours. Many fear, even though they would not believe it, that spirits are near them. Lonely places, the consecrated silence of the church, and church-yard, are still in our feelings, if not in our philosophy, the temporary habitations of visitors from the unseen world. That there is much superstition in this way, none will deny; but that there is skepticism in another, which is worse, is equally plain.

It is neither unreasonable nor unscriptural to believe that even human spirits are permitted to come close up to the borders of mortal life, and bend their ears up to the material veil; and in their anxiety for our welfare, break through the affinities of spiritual existence into the sphere of human life, as Moses and Elias did on the mount of transfiguration, or like the dead saints that rose, and came into Jerusalem after

the resurrection of Christ. Perhaps they are often unseen around us, for

“ Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we walk and when we sleep.”

Presentiments, which are so common, and through which such marvellous deliverances from danger have been effected, may be whispers from the spirit-world. There have been presentiments which could not be accounted for on natural principles, and why should we think it necessary so to account for them, when we are thus warranted, from actual Bible facts, to believe that spirits may be the authors of them. Persons of a lonely and deeply spiritual character are most likely to have presentiments; may it not be because their home-sick spirits, always living on the verge of the unseen world, hear whispers which the dull ear of sense, and worldlings, hear not?

“ And may we then indeed believe you nigh,—
Ye whom we loved and wept so long ??”

Here I lay down my pen—but here do I not end my meditations on the heavenly land. My thoughts, and feelings, and hopes, crowd onward still. Along the misty Jordan, which bounds the future side of this mortal life, I continue to walk up and down, crowding upon its awful confines, and looking anxiously across, till the fog breaks. “ Blessed are they that are home-sick, for they shall come to their Father’s house.”

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